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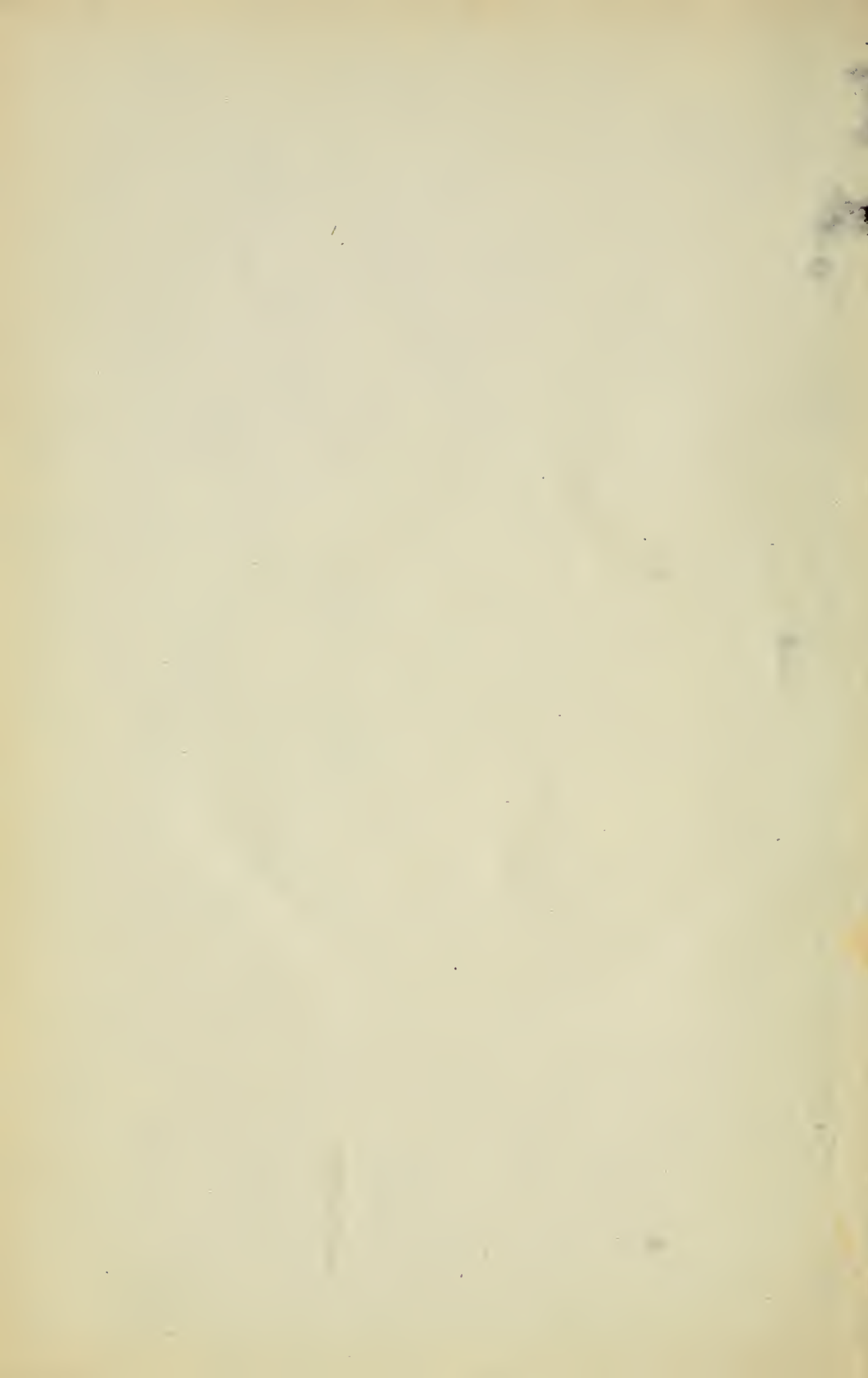
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HAND-BOOK  
OF  
PROGRESSIVE PHILOSOPHY



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HAND-BOOK

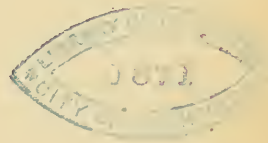
OF

PROGRESSIVE PHILOSOPHY

BY

EDWARD SCHILLER

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TO HIS FRIEND,  
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THIS VOLUME  
IS  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BY THE

AUTHOR.



## L'ENVOI.

THE book I herewith offer to the public is intended rather as a handbook for the general reader, than for the use of the philosophical student. Its statements might have been more fully supported by many interesting incidents and illustrations, but these would scarcely have been of sufficient importance to warrant the additional expense of a much enlarged volume, increasing its cost to the publisher, and consequently to the public.

Living remote from the great centres of thought, I have not recently had access to extensive libraries, and some of my quotations have been made from memory. In other matters I have relied on the statements in Cyclopædias, and the treatises in such works are too brief to be of much use to an author. I have endeavored in all cases to avoid giving any doubtful authorities, but it is proper to say, that some of the notes from which this book were written were made many years ago, and may have grown rusty with age.

I cannot but believe that this little volume, with

all its imperfections, will supply a want to a great many readers who have neither the means to procure, nor the time to study the productions of the great philosophers of modern times, but who may still wish to acquire a concise knowledge of the great science of philosophy, and in this belief it is now submitted to their consideration.

THE AUTHOR.

FORT SCOTT, KANSAS,

March 18th, 1871.



# HAND-BOOK

OF

## PROGRESSIVE PHILOSOPHY.

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### Part I.

#### CHAPTER I.

As it is manifest to any observing mind that the difference between man and all other animals consists chiefly in his having a *Soul*, the possession of which enables him to think and reason, and renders him a subject of moral government, it well becomes a point of pertinent inquiry for the possessor of this soul, to consider its affinities and relations, in order to judge its true value and power.

From the dawn of Philosophy has this inquiry been the favorite and chief topic of investigation with the disciples of this great science, and men in all climes, of all ages, and of all creeds, have each in their turn and their way endeavored to solve the problem thus presented, to their own satisfaction. There are men, for instance, who attribute to the soul divine powers, while others class it only as a superior sort of instinct; some say that it is born and dies with man, while the opposite side contends

that this soul migrates from one body into another. Again, there are not a few who maintain that the soul is a part of God himself, and that it returns to Him at the cessation of life in the human body. In fine, the opinions which are entertained by men as to the soul, its origin, and its destiny, are so manifold and contradictory, as to make it impossible to harmonize humanity on this, so essential a part of itself. At present, forbearing to enter on a discussion of the merits of these different beliefs, I propose merely to elucidate this matter from a *natural* point of view.

A man who believes in one God, in an all-wise, all-seeing and all-directing Creator, cannot but believe that the soul by which only he is enabled to divine the existence of this superior and incomprehensible power above him, is the choicest gift of this beneficent Creator. The possession of this knowledge alone brings man nearer to God, and is the very source of science, *since this knowledge creates a yearning or a desire for spiritual instruction or improvement.* Further, by the possession of the soul, man is raised above his fellow-creatures, and dominion is given him over them. The soul, in fact, is the grand, needful essence by which man is enabled to live on earth. Without it, the human race would have been swept long ago from the face of this planet, and it is only by the possession of this soul, that man has been able to overcome and conquer the obstacles of Nature. The struggles of man and his triumphs are visible in every quarter of the world, and the narrative of these struggles and triumphs is what we

call history. It is the one grand epic of all ages and of all times.

The first attribute of the soul, no doubt, is *thought*; the next we should say is *love*. These two, in their turn, generate *fear* and *trust*; and from these latter spring the passions for good or evil, which constitute the character of man. The first question which naturally arises will be to inquire what constitutes the difference in men's thoughts, or what we commonly denominate their mental capacity. The question will be, "Why is it that since all men have a soul given to them, to enable them to think and to reason, that there should be a difference in the results of the working of the soul among men? Can God," so the questioner will ask, "have been so partial as to endow a portion of mankind with superior gifts to those he has given to the rest?"

Apparently there is an injustice, but, if we study the causes, we shall see that the difference is owing solely to the influence of physical laws. The late Henry Thomas Buckle, in his Introduction to the History of Civilization in England, rightly maintains that, in the first place, climate, food and soil are the great influences on which is dependent the accumulation of wealth; that wealth, in its turn, produces leisure, and that leisure produces knowledge. No barbarous people, he says, dependent on their labor for their daily bread, have ever had time to devote to the cultivation of their mental powers, and it was only when men were released from the necessity of toil, that arts and sciences began to flourish. We can even now see the truth of this observation. The

farmer who breaks up the raw prairie in the Far West, may have as great mental powers as the lawyer who pleads in the courts, yet while the former is compelled to labor almost solely with his physical powers, in order to sustain life, the latter is enabled to exert and expand his mental faculties in a much greater degree.

Now, in olden times, our primitive ancestors having no wealth, had no necessity for laws or law-suits. When wealth, however, began to accumulate, the necessity for laws arose, and at the same time society began to divide itself into upper and lower classes, into producers of wealth and possessors of wealth. Labor and capital became separate and distinct from each other. The upper classes, by the possession of wealth, became possessors of leisure and could acquire knowledge, while the lower classes were compelled to continue to work in order to sustain life. As a necessary consequence, the upper classes could, with more leisure, better food, and better dwellings, improve faster than their less fortunate fellow-men, and make greater progress in knowledge. But the inequality, in course of time, became so great, that the upper classes themselves began to dread the brute force of the lower ones, as displayed for instance in the great French Revolution. Hence arose the best remedy, namely, the adoption of Universal Education. The safety of society, it is now admitted, lies in Universal Education on the broadest possible basis, and to-day it has been made one of the chief duties of Government to supply the means to all classes, for the development of the powers of the

soul, in such a manner as will benefit the individual and the State to the fullest degree. For it has been shown that the more perfect the system of Education is, the more prosperous becomes the State, the more wealth is collected, the more knowledge is disseminated, the fewer crimes are committed, and the more happiness is diffused.



## CHAPTER II.

THERE is no doubt a great difficulty in describing the soul, and hence have also arisen all the strife and contest between the opposing philosophical schools, which will indeed be as endless as the world itself. But with these disputes the present work has nothing whatever to do. The soul, we will say, is godlike. It is a Spirit. We can neither see nor hear it, yet we can judge it by its works, and hence we can speculate as to its character and functions. We surmise, for instance, that God has created the universe, but how it was created, when it was created, and for what purpose it was created, is more than mortal man can undertake to say. Our knowledge, even though expanding from day to day, is yet very limited, and, with all our boasted progress, we may be said to be, in the knowledge of the universe, only at the threshold of the great school.

The soul being a spirit is of course the opposite of what we denominate Nature, a term which is applied to the aggregate physical substances of the Earth. These things are visible, or at least can be felt by the aid of the senses. But the soul can, as we said before, be only judged by its affinities and their workings.

In illustrating this, let us commence at the dawn

of life itself. The infant in the cradle has a soul, but it lies dormant. The bodily infirmities as yet throw a cloud over the mental faculties. But as the infant gains strength from day to day, the power of the soul begins to manifest itself; slowly at first, but surely; and here again the question of climate, food and soil enters largely into the activity of the soul. A child well cared for will develop faster than one neglected, and the great mortality of children in large cities is principally owing to the great want of care, to poor food, to bad ventilation and *the previous bad condition of the parents*. In a short time the new citizen of the world begins to notice the surrounding objects, especially those of a bright color and of a movable nature. Who has not noticed, for instance, the special attention which young children bestow on fire?

Day by day their powers of observation increase, and long before the faculty of speaking is developed, their memory has already commenced to exercise its functions. Memory we may safely assert to be the result of observation. It is by the powers of hearing, seeing and feeling that it is fed. Therefore it is just to say, that when our memory recollects anything, it results from our having observed it through the aid of these powers, which, in consequence, are the physical connecting links between body and soul. Without their aid, memory could not exist, but memory itself must be regarded as a part of the soul, or one of its attributes. It is defined by Dr. Webster as the "faculty of the mind by which it retains the knowledge of past events or ideas which are past." This

is perhaps a somewhat faulty definition, since it can not be properly said of an idea which is really past, especially when the word is used in the place of conception or opinion, which may be fixed and permanent, and, therefore, always present.

But memory itself undergoes vast changes, and these changes are the result of the varying condition of man. It grows more rapidly, or, more properly speaking, it expands faster than the growth of the body. It is perhaps in its fullest vigor in the third decade of life, but after that time it begins to fail and decline. In order to attain the full expansion of Memory, discipline and corresponding exercise are as much needed as they are to foster the growth of the body, and it is part of the system of education to develop this great attribute of the soul. However, a child's memory should not be overburdened, as is too often the case, because its too rapid growth is not corresponding with the slower growth of the physical powers. Such undue exercise of memory is almost invariably followed by an undue expansion of the brain, out of proportion to the other corporeal parts. After the third decade in life is passed, memory, as I said before, begins to decline, till it ends, in Shakespeare's words:

“In second childhood and mere oblivion.”

There are some who retain a wonderful share of their memory even in old age, but there are many others who impair it even before they are old, mostly by sensual pleasures and excesses in life. Let it not be imagined, however, that intemperance, or a too

frequent indulgence of sexual intercourse are alone here embraced. They are, it is true, some of the main causes of the premature weakening of memory, but any over-exertion of either the powers of the soul or the body, when long continued, will bring on the loss of this attribute. For instance, gluttony, which overloads the stomach, and by this means compels the powers of the mind to lie dormant, owing to the inability of its corporeal aids to do their required task. An unequal distribution of memory may also be remarked as being characteristic among all classes of society. This naturally arises from the diversity of occupation which men follow. The merchant chiefly remembers the commercial transactions he is engaged in; the lawyer his briefs, and the soldier his campaigns. But there are thousands of other events and scenes they have witnessed which are often, if not totally, forgotten; at least they are so vaguely impressed on their minds, that if questioned in regard to them, they are but imperfectly recalled to their recollection.

As to the value of memory, little needs to be said. Its necessity is apparent to us every day of our life. To some degree animals share memory with man, but it is chiefly confined to animal wants. Not so with thought. In its place, animals are merely gifted with an *instinct*. It has been asserted by some philosophers that instinct and thought are identical; that animals think as well as man, and the sagacity of dogs, of bees, of elephants and of other brutes has been put forth as evidence to support the assertion. But I think this hypothesis cannot be established by



evidence. An instinct, I take it, is a power at work almost simultaneous with birth; necessary in order to allow its possessors to provide themselves with means of subsistence. This instinct man shares with animals, but it cannot be called thought, or assimilated to it. If the bees, for instance, had the power of thought, would they not build their hives in inaccessible places, where men could not get their stores of honey? Thought is a plant of slow growth, while instinct, as I have just observed, is almost fully developed at birth. Thought is not fully developed for years. It grows slower than memory, but it also remains longer. Children of tender years do not think, though they observe, notice and recollect objects and events. They are censured and excused for awkward or ill-mannered expressions and actions, because they are known to be thoughtless. But day by day thought develops itself more fully, and it is only when this capacity for thought is supposed to be sufficiently developed, that society or the State will allow us to become emancipated from the control of parents and guardians, and give us the direction of our own affairs.

Thought may not inaptly be called the mainspring of the soul, or, perhaps more correctly, its pilot, for it not only sets the other powers of the soul to work, but it also guides them in whatever path it may choose to exercise its functions. Here again the different systems of philosophy vary from each other. For while the predestinarian believes all events to be foreordained, the advocate of free-agency in man makes it dependent on thought, whether good or



evil will result from its action. Without going at length into an investigation of the merits of this theory of predestination, I am nevertheless compelled to observe, that however solacing such a belief may be, not only to criminals but even to honest men, this theory reduces man merely to a machine, an automaton, which does such and such acts, because it is forced to do them, because this machine was foreordained to do it. Such a belief degrades man to a level with the inferior animals. It takes away the value we set on thought, and excuses any action, however bad, on the plea of infallible necessity. But, in reality, these actions for which Predestination stands forth as the apologist, are the result of nothing but *inclination*, which Webster defines as a leaning of the mind or will, or a disposition more favorable to one thing than another. We are deceived into believing that the direction thought has given to our actions is not of our own doing, but of a marked-out plan of the Almighty. Thought has been often compared to the latent power which is developed by the passions. In using the word passion, however, in this instance, it is only meant to denote a susceptibility of impression from extraneous causes.

## CHAPTER III.

I NOW come to speak of Love. Some of the ancient philosophers gave it the first place among the attributes of the soul, but I have preferred, important an element though it be in man's composition, to place it after Thought. Its two great subdivisions are, love sensual and love intellectual or spiritual. The former I have named first, simply because it is the first to develop itself. Our senses generate it, and therefore it does not properly belong here, where we simply treat of the soul as distinguished from instinctive feelings. Intellectual love itself, must be divided into love divine and love human. Love divine we feel toward the Creator. It is generated by the contemplation of his works. Whoever looks up at the stars, the thousands of worlds by which this earth is surrounded, must be impressed with love divine toward the Creator of this immense universe. But this love is also mingled with awe, suspense and admiration. On contemplating his works, even in experiencing this love, we are at the same time impressed with the grandeur, with the majesty of God. Well indeed has one of the poets\* of our day expressed himself when he says :

\* W. C. Bryant. Forest Hymn.

“The groves were God’s first temples. Ere man learned  
 To hew the shaft and lay the architrave,  
 And spread the roof above them—ere he framed  
 The lofty vault, to gather and roll back  
 The sound of anthems ; in the darkling wood,  
 Amidst the cool and silence, he knelt down,  
 And offered to the Mightiest solemn thanks  
 And supplication. For his simple heart  
 Might not resist the sacred influences  
 Which, from the stilly twilight of the place,  
 And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven  
 Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound  
 Of the invisible breath that swayed at once  
 All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed  
 His spirit with the thought of boundless power  
 And inaccessible majesty.”

This spirit of the “thought of boundless power and inaccessible majesty” generated our admiration and produced love. It is by the contemplation of Nature that the greatest and purest teachers of mankind first learned to reverence and to love the Creator. Hereby they were first led to ponder on man’s own condition, on his superiority over the other creatures surrounding him, and on his nearness to the Creator himself through the possession of his godlike soul. Offerings, sacrifices, prayers, and shrines then began to attest this reverence and love of man for the incomprehensible power which he felt above him, and which he, by exercise of thought, learned that it protected and loved him. That the nations of the earliest historical times should have adopted polytheism instead of a belief in one God,

does not enter here in our remarks, except in order to show that the love divine these nations felt was expressed to many imaginary gods instead of to the one all-controlling Spirit. Their love divine was not expressed so strongly and so markedly as our own, because of the, as yet, low standard of knowledge and science in their midst. But as man advanced in civilization, as investigation progressed, as the laws of Nature began to be unfolded to his eye, this love divine became stronger, purer, and truer. It will thus be seen that knowledge is essential for the appreciation and love of the Creator. It requires a reflecting mind to bring us truly into communion with God, since it is not through a mere instinct but through a development of the attributes of the soul with which we are endowed, that we study and learn the laws of Nature, and comprehend, partially at least, the Creator's designs. And when we learn this, we are also simultaneously imbued with love divine. But this love divine also imposes on us duties and responsibilities. The first is,—and it is the chief duty of man—to make himself in his conduct, in his manner of life, as near the Great Model as it is possible for mortal man to be.

To accomplish this, it is required of man to follow the Truth. Man is endowed with reason, the faculty by which he distinguishes truth from error and good from evil, or, more correctly speaking, right from wrong. It is a faculty which we exercise daily and hourly, and which, indeed, is the fundamental principle of all human laws; since no law could be enacted and executed except for the avowed pur-



pose of making a distinction between right and wrong. True, there may be laws which are wrong and unjust, but this does not invalidate the argument in this case. All human laws claim to emanate from reason, and since reason is the faculty of knowing good from evil, no law-maker will stultify himself so greatly as to declare that his law is contrary to reason, and that it is designed to foster the wrong instead of the right. But the Creator's laws, all men are agreed, are infallible. To them all men must bow, or else lose that love divine which we ought to entertain. These laws are self-executing, and their neglect brings corresponding punishment. Their violation is in antagonism with, and contrary to, Order.

Order, like Truth, is one of the fundamental principles of the laws of the Creator. Hence it is that the astronomer can calculate with almost hair-breadth exactitude, the movements of our own as well as of the surrounding worlds. All nature is a great example of Order. The seasons change in order, day and night follow in order, the clouds and the rains, the tempests and the calms all alike move in order. Without order, indeed, this whole Universe would be doomed to destruction. Planets and suns, comets and moons, were they to move out of their order would destroy each other. Were the changes of the seasons not to come in order, were day and night not to alternate in turn, nothing would live on earth. But this order is also closely connected with progress. The changes of the earth are progressive as well as in order. The geologist di-

vides the strata of the earth into periods, showing the progress of their formation as distinct as if they had been recorded on the historic page. It will thus be seen how really essential is a cultivation of science, not alone in the contemplation of Nature, but for the higher purpose of an acquisition of the love divine. When we are therefore asked what the laws of the Creator teach us, our reply should be, "Wisdom, the right use or exercise of knowledge, the choice of laudable ends and the best means to accomplish them." We should also say, "They teach us prudence, which is the exercise of sound judgment in avoiding evils. We should say they teach us piety and veneration for the Creator. We should finally say, they teach us pity, benevolence and sympathy, which three qualities, combined with piety, are the mainsprings of human love.

The love human, the offspring of the teachings of the love divine, is exercised in our relations and transactions with our fellow-men. Our parents, our children, our relatives and friends, are the first objects of this love, and it is extended to a greater or less degree towards all men. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," is a saying as old as man himself, and no truly good man will allow himself to disregard it. It is to be found in all religious creeds and is taught by all schools. That it is too often disregarded, is owing to selfishness in the violators of this law. To guard against violations of this great law, society has enacted laws and instituted courts of justice. These tribunals are of high antiquity, dating from the time when nations were formed, or rather, when

man began to accumulate wealth. For a thorough and concise exposition of the institution of human tribunals the reader is referred to the chapter on the Rights of Property in Blackstone's Commentaries.

Though not strictly belonging here, we must advert to a topic often discussed and yet undecided, namely, whether man is naturally depraved or naturally good. This Natural Depravity theory has found many supporters, but with my conception of the Deity, I cannot subscribe to it. I cannot imagine or think for a minute, that the benevolent Creator chose to put on earth monsters of iniquity, who would prey on one another, and who only could be made good and virtuous by motives of self-interest. Besides, such a theory is degrading to the character of man himself, and love for each other only possible when it is advantageous for man's interest. Under the supposition, on the contrary, that this love human is born with man, that man is naturally good, we have no difficulty to account for the origin of Nations. Man was drawn to man, not alone to benefit himself, but also each other. When men commit bad acts, they are not because of a natural depravity in men, but owing to extraneous causes which influence our passions. These passions are of an opposite nature. For instance :

Joy,	Terror,
Pleasure,	Grief,
Disinterestedness,	Covetousness,
Love,	Hatred,
Pity,	Envy,
Diligence,	Indolence,



Benevolence,  
Truth,  
Gravity,

Avarice,  
Falsehood,  
Levity,

and so on. All these various causes enter into the exercise or repression of the love human. They shape our actions for good or evil, and, therefore, have not been inaptly styled the controllers of the soul. When our passions are exercised in a direction for good, we experience that sensation which is called happiness. When otherwise, we become unhappy, and even though not punished by human laws, we are experiencing mental pain or punishment.

## CHAPTER IV.

WHEN we produce an article of industry we know that we design it for a specific purpose; a pair of shoes, for instance, to cover our feet, or a house to dwell in. Now since the Creator gave us a soul, the question arises, What was this soul made for, and why was it given to man? Certainly, the answer will be, that the Creator had an object in view in thus endowing us with so precious a spirit, which raises us high above the surrounding creations of the earth, and which gives us the power to subdue to our will and pleasure whatever there is of earth. If we have a work of magnitude to perform, if a road is to be made, if a steamship is to be built, if a canal is to be dug, we employ a number of workmen. Over these we place overseers, who are supposed to be experienced men, and who understand how to direct the movements of our workmen; now, if we make this comparison, we are perhaps justified in saying, that we have a soul given to us to fit us for the work of overseers, or stewards. But a mature consideration of the subject will show us, that God has no need of man's stewardship, since the acorn will shoot up into the oak, without our help, and the beasts will go forth and multiply, without our supervision. Besides, the works of man are wrought solely for his

own needs, comforts and pleasures, and they would be faithless stewards indeed who labor only for their own behalf, and return nought to their employer.

It is indeed impossible for the limited powers of our mind to fathom the designs of the Creator, but how often, nevertheless, does our soul ask itself the purpose of its mission? Those who deny the existence of a future state of the soul,—its immortality—attribute, of course, its powers only to our peculiar formation. They affirm that the soul is born and dies with man, and that it has no other mission save the one which it fulfills while the spark of life is in the body. But, would not man be the most miserable of all creatures on earth, were such really the case? Says one of the most eminent philosophers and purest of men,\* “If the soul was mortal as well as the body, if we had to die in soul as well as in body, man must certainly be the most unfortunate of beings on earth; it would be really horrible to think that we should have only been put on earth to die, like a common herd of cattle, and such an idea would attribute to the all-good and all-mighty Creator of the universe (as I believe him to be) delight and pleasure in cruelty, inasmuch as he would have endowed us with reason for the sole purpose of embittering our life on earth, when reflecting how speedily it must terminate, and soul as well as body with it. The worst of men could speedily emancipate and release themselves from the divine control, and a poniard might easily effect the separation between the Creator and man. The wisest and best of men, the foun-

\* Moses Mendelssohn.

ders of all our social institutions, humanity itself, would all have cheated, not alone others, but themselves."

Those who believe that the soul's stay on earth is its preparatory school for a mission hereafter, adopt, according to my view, the most plausible and tenable supposition. In fact it is an inward feeling, the consciousness of which all men experience; it is to be found in the religious history of every nation, whether of ancient or of modern times. The Elysium and the Tartarus of the Greeks, the happy hunting-grounds of the North American Indians, the Suttees of Hindostan, all alike point to this belief in a hereafter. The *Divina Commedia* of Dante, the greatest literary work of the Middle Ages, treats entirely of an imaginary after-world, filled almost entirely, however, with friends and foes of the poet, whose political sins are punished and atoned for, or their political virtues rewarded. The Descent of Ulysses into Hades, as narrated by Homer, is another illustration of the antiquity of this belief, and as I have said before, we find traces of it in the history of every nation.

However imperfect and crude this belief may have been among the ancients, it is important for us to know that it had an existence among them, and that, as knowledge and science advanced, it became holier, purer and more sublime. Even among the Pagans there were philosophers like Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others who speculated on the immortality of the soul and its mission, but unfortunately their schools were almost inaccessible to the lower classes



of society, nor were those classes, even by their training and education, properly fitted to appreciate the teachings of these masters. The philosophical schools of the ancients, though they have done immense service, were, however, only like hot-house plants, and the common people derived but little benefit from them. As a consequence, when the Roman Empire fell, the schools of the philosophers fell with it, since to give vitality to institutions or creeds, the support of the masses of the people is needed, and these masses being but imperfectly, or not at all instructed in philosophy, could not be expected to retain or propagate doctrines which they either only knew partially, or of which they were totally ignorant. The numberless wars and feuds of the Middle Ages, the yoke of the Church which rested upon the masses, and the almost total neglect of the culture of letters averted the cause of mental inquiry, and the seeds planted by the early philosophers were long lying dormant in the ground.

But as the day succeeds the night, and as the calm follows the storm, so the dense barbarism of the Middle Ages had to give way to an age of progress. With the invention of the art of printing, man started, as it were, on a new era of existence. The means of indefinitely communicating ideas to the contemporaneous world, as well as to posterity, were thereby firmly secured, and retrograde movements in science rendered impossible. Philosophy, since that day, received a wonderful impulse, and to enumerate the writers alone on that branch of study, would require a stupendous catalogue. Much, very much has been

written on philosophy, and its systems have multiplied, but is the subject exhausted? Has any one writer completely solved the problem we are speaking of—this mission of the soul? We must answer, No. Though a great deal of good has been accomplished, yet the difference of the theories of the various systems of philosophy are so conflicting, and often so irreconcilable, that to look for unity among philosophers themselves, would be an idle waste of time, either at present or hereafter. But undoubtedly, as I said, the labors of these men have been productive of good, because, even if they have not been able to elucidate the whole of the truth, they have to a great degree succeeded in bringing us nearer to it. Far be it from me to pretend that I may succeed better in this investigation than these learned, wise and illustrious men. On the contrary, profiting by their labors, I mean to give a concise statement of what has been accomplished in this field of science.

I have already stated that I incline to the belief that the soul's stay on earth is merely a preparatory school for its greater usefulness and larger fields of action in its future existence; and the following reasons seem to me to be the most cogent in support of this supposition. The Creator we have seen and daily see in our intercourse with Nature, puts nothing on earth without a certain purpose. Stones, plants, animals, have all been created for a definite object. Nothing is useless in this world, though, in more than one instance, we may not know what use to make of the materials which the Creator has

placed in our hands. To give an illustration we need but point to petroleum. How many centuries elapsed before man began to notice this now most essential article of domestic economy? Its usefulness was not discovered till it was needed. It is need which puts men's minds at work to investigate the treasures with which they are surrounded and the use they can make of them. Accidental discoveries and inventions there are, of course, but their number in reality is very limited.

The soul which the Creator has given us is a needful part in man's organization. It is, besides, the badge of superiority, and in reality the governing power on earth, as far as human actions are concerned. Without it man's stay on earth would be impossible. When it leaves us, our bodies decay and wither like the flowers of the fields. The clay of our bodies mingles again with Mother Earth. But what becomes of our soul? Can a soul die? Can it utterly perish? I think not. Like the drop of water which, when converted into steam, flies into the realms of air, joins itself to clouds and in rain-drops returns to the earth, may not our soul undergo a similar process? May it not return to upper regions in company with other souls? May it not even return to this planet, or wander further on to some one of those countless earths, which are disclosed to our vision when the sun sets in the West and night throws her mantle over us? It is not reasonable to suppose that the soul's mission is ended with the death of the body. Such a supposition would be in conflict with the laws of nature. Na-



ture, we know, reproduces herself. After regular intervals the flowers return to deck the fields, the blossoms re-appear on the trees, and the green grass re-covers the meadows. The fruits of the earth, after nourishing us, return as fertilizers to the ground, and neither their oxygen nor hydrogen is lost. Yet these are inanimate, soulless creations. Why, then, should we suppose that this godlike soul can ever be lost? On the contrary, it would be safe to assume that its mission is never ended. There is work for it whether in our body or out of it. It is one of the ever-restless, unceasingly working agents of Nature, which, so soon as released from one field of labor, finds elsewhere another post for its usefulness. The all-wise Creator has, however, forbidden us to look further. The field of doubt and supposition alone is open to us. We may all speculate as to the hereafter, but no one can tell whether we are right in any hypothesis we may build. Where is the man who is able to decide whether we doubt and suppose correctly or not? We ourselves may think that we are on the right path, but after all we may be in error.

It is on this topic that the theological battle wages among all creeds and religions. Each has its theory, and each claims that theory to be the only correct one. Yet there never has been a creed, and perhaps never will be one, which was recognized universally as the true one. Who can count the different theories which have prevailed among men during historic times? How much of error and fable has not been incorporated with a few grains of truth?

Generations have lived and nations have passed away, one after the other, like the seasons of the year, and still the same mystery and doubts are not cleared up. Our learning has increased, our wealth has multiplied, our earthly institutions have prospered, but our knowledge of the hereafter has not progressed an iota in the many centuries which have passed.

## CHAPTER V.

IN speaking in the preceding pages of a possibility of the soul's returning to earth, we ought to have added that though possible, it is not probable. Those who believe in transmigration do so on the hypothesis that our soul, though powerful, cannot act without the aid of the body, and that its powers are latent till it again combines with either a similar or a different substance through which it can act. Now, were our soul to enter the body of an animal, as is the Buddhist belief, would not this animal on becoming endowed with this human soul become as rational as man? Again, we cannot assume that our soul can re-enter a human body, unless we also assume the preposterous idea that we have forgotten all we knew in a previous existence in the body on earth, and are forced to commence our work anew. This doctrine of transmigration of spirits on earth, brings us no nearer than we are to the Creator, nor do we become any more useful. The desire which every human being feels, or ought to feel, within him, to fit himself for a world hereafter, would be useless, since we could only regard ourselves as prisoners bound to the earth. Were such to be the case, should we not be justified in accusing the Creator of cruelty in

implanting this longing for the hereafter in our breasts, while at the same time he is condemning us to everlasting peregrinations on earth?

But I will say this much as a conviction which has grown up within me, and which has been increased and strengthened by long reflection, namely, that it is safe to assume, that notwithstanding its long existence on earth, the human race is as yet in its infancy ; that notwithstanding its great progress in learning and comprehending the laws of physical nature, we have not yet mastered even these, and only when we shall know them more fully, will it be possible for us to know those higher laws regarding our soul and regarding the hereafter. Each day, each month, each year, it is true, witnesses some progress, and we are to-day far better able to judge of these things than our forefathers were, but our knowledge is confined mostly to earthly and not to spiritual matters. Still we must make even more progress in these if we wish to solve the mystery. For instance, the immense distance which separates us from the other heavenly bodies, has precluded us from learning much about them, except as to the order of their movements, their probable magnitude, and their influence upon each other. But does this satisfy us? Do we not wish to know, for instance, whether they are inhabited, and what these inhabitants are like? Do we not wish to know of their oceans, of their rivers, of their mountains? Of all this we know nothing, and until science advances further, until she advances far enough to bring us, the inhabitants of the earth, in communication with

the inhabitants of the other stars, we cannot even hope to judge correctly of the world hereafter, simply because we do not know the world we now live in.



## CHAPTER VI.

CONSIDERING that we possess reasoning powers, that we know good from evil, and that we also know that it is wrong for us to do the latter for momentary advantage, or any other motive, in preference to the former, it may well be supposed that our soul should be held accountable. Yet how far? I have already stated that a violation of the laws of Nature—its physical laws—brings its own punishment. Then there are human laws which punish transgressions against society, but the soul is held amenable to a higher law, about which we know as little as we know of our hereafter. The chief question in my mind is, whether our accountability ceases with our stay on earth? The theological schools have in most instances, held that judgment is to be passed on our soul after the death of the body. Some make this judgment take place immediately, while others have solemnly described the advent of the great, dreadful, final day, when the almighty shall sit in judgment on all men, when the righteous shall be rewarded, and the wicked shall be punished. To me it looks rather absurd, if not laughable to imagine that the souls of the millions of men who have lived and died before us and will live and die after us, are to be assembled altogether to await trial and

judgment. Just think what an enormous work this would be, to pass judgment on all these souls, who are to stand before the justest of judges, and who will have to give a fair trial to all. Then as to the punishment. A soul being a spirit, how is it to be punished? Again, some men have not lived as wickedly as others. Some have been good men, and others far better. How long a time would have to elapse for the finishing up of this interminable docket? This day of judgment would be almost a matter of infinity. Then, if God, on the other hand, judges us immediately after death, and we know that a man dies every second on earth, must not his time necessarily be occupied with acting as judge?

This matter, with my limited comprehension, looks to me almost as impossible to fathom as an attempt to count the stars in the firmament. I will not, therefore, speculate even on the probable decrees of this mythical judgment-day, for if we do not know of the future condition of our soul, except that of its immortality, we cannot parcel out imaginary places of punishment, or attempt to set apart places in heaven or in hell, as is too often even now-a-days done.



## CHAPTER VII.

THERE is a kind of feeling in men which, in place of a better word, I have to designate as the "sensibility" of the soul. In using this word, I mean to convey to the reader, the susceptibility of the soul to perceive, not as the word is commonly used, external objects, but rather internal ideas. It is one of the most remarkable facts in the history of the human race, that every reasonable being seems to be attracted toward a future state of existence by an innate yearning. Toward the past our soul seems to be indifferent. We do not meet with the inquiry "Where does our soul come from?" half as often as the question "Where does our soul go to?" A longing and yet a dread of the hereafter; a desire to lift the veil of futurity; a wish to catch a glimpse of eternity, are alike visible in the records of ancient as well as of modern nations. The oldest epic of Hellas, the *Odyssey* of Homer, gives us a prolix account of the popular belief prevailing among the Greeks in regard to the abiding-place of departed souls. The pictures given us by the blind bard of Smyrna have been interwoven so successfully with the history of literature, that they are even to this day as well known to us as they were when minstrels recited them at the Olympian Festivals. Then comes the *Divina*

*Commedia* of Dante, to which we have alluded ere this. *Paradise Lost* and the *Messiah* by Klopstock, are the most noteworthy of the literary productions of this class, of latter days. But the skepticism and the bolder range of investigation in philosophy, as we shall see hereafter, have made the production of a poem of this character almost an impossibility in in our own age.

The sensibility of the soul is chiefly affected, if not directed, by Truth. Truth is born with us. How do we ever lose it? Simply by contact with the world. Children will naturally speak the truth, and it is a powerful argument for the theory, that man does not owe the possession of virtue to society, that the love of truth is innate in our breasts. The lover of truth is a lover of virtue. No villain loves truth, and only speaks truth when truth will further his object and the accomplishment of his desires. The aim of all science, in whatever branch, is the discovery of truth. Side by side with truth is virtue, but virtue cannot exist without truth. Falsehood and vice naturally are the two opposite sensibilities. From the exercise of these spring the passions, which I have already partly enumerated, but now propose to speak of more fully.

*Pleasure* and *grief* are two opposite expressions of the sensibility of the soul. Delightful and painful sensations are mixed and intermingled in the life of every human being. No mortal, however unfortunate he may deem himself to be, is without his due share of pleasure, while on the other hand, even the most fortunate has his modicum of grief, for an over-

plus of pleasure would be death even to the most fortunate. Shakespeare gives a most admirable illustration of a case where grief and sorrow are almost overwhelming till relieved by pleasure. I refer to his *King Lear*. There he pictures the old blind sovereign as deserted and forsaken by his courtiers, his subjects and even by his favorite daughter. He is left alone in a forest, a tempest is raging in all its fury; the very elements seem to have combined with his enemies to fill the king's cup of misery; he is ready to die, when *Cordelia* appears, and brings relief by infusing pleasure. An opposite illustration is the incident in the life of David, the King of Israel. He has just successfully quenched a dangerous rebellion, and his kingdom is restored to him intact, but the pleasure of the achievement is saddened by the miserable death of his son Absalom.

An agreeable sensation has not inaptly been defined as a perception of perfection, while sorrow or grief mark the sensation of the imperfection. An alternate experience of both is as necessary to man as the change of seasons is to Nature, for a surfeit of either would make life insupportable. This is too well known a fact to need further illustration. I must, however, here revert to the symptoms by which we commonly show pleasure or grief, namely, laughing and crying. Though the former generally denotes pleasure, and the latter grief, yet both may be produced by either of these passions. Thus we hear of people crying with pleasure, or of scornful laughter, but in these cases it is the intensity of our feelings which produces the opposite symptoms.

*Pity* we may rank as the next passion by which the sensibility of the soul is exercised. It is commonly described as a mixed sensation, produced from the love we bear a certain object, and the misfortune we see it suffer. A very natural though opposite passion is *Anger* toward the cause to which we ascribe the wrongful act which has excited our pity. *Hatred* is the stronger degree of anger, and is almost invariably attended with a wrongful love for those causes which contribute to the detriment of the object we dislike. This criminal love, so totally different from pure love, is intensified or lessened by the corresponding strength which our soul receives. We may hate some men, for instance, more than others, because our soul is more strongly impressed with what we conceive to be their imperfections. Misanthropy is perhaps the strongest form or degree of hatred, since we feel it not for a few individuals, but all our fellow-men. It is a curious but perfectly natural result, that good men will oftener become misanthropic than depraved; the reason therefor being; that the shock of deceit or fraud practiced on them is felt so much more acutely by their souls; and love is converted thereby into hatred.

*Courage* and *fear* may also here be noticed as the workings of the sensibilities of the soul. Courage, however, as well as fear, is not confined to mere physical causes, but, on the contrary, to mental ones, and a man indeed who may be physically courageous, because he is strong, may be a moral coward, because, for instance, he is fearful of the evil consequences any of his acts may have upon himself.



## CHAPTER VIII.

I AM now to treat of the powers of the soul, and of the means requisite to make them useful. Like the rough block of marble lying unused in the quarry, till human hands raise it up to the surface of the earth and fashion and mould it, our soul is dormant, its powers are undeveloped till other hands come to our aid; and this help is the mutual influence which one member of society exerts over the others. As we shall see hereafter, it depends on the degree of what we call civilization, to retard or advance the activity of the powers of the soul. But of this, more hereafter. Unlike the other animals, man has a long term of infancy. He is

“Mewling and puking in the nurse’s arms,”

as Shakespeare says, the most helpless creature which sees the light of day. Nothing, perhaps, shows clearer the will of Providence that men should live together, should help each other, and should love each other, than this utter helplessness and dependence on our fellow-men for so long a time. This dependence has brought forth the institutions of families, of tribes, and of nations. The bodily infirmities of the infant scarcely would suggest the possession of the soul, if

we did not know it from the previous history of mankind. Slowly and tediously pass the days of the dawning of intellect in man, and were it not for parental care and solicitude implanted in us in a far superior degree than in animals, the body would succumb and perish ere the soul could begin to start on its earthly mission.

The first effort of the soul in its infancy consists in the endeavor to retain the impressions it receives. Watch the one-year old child holding out its arms to parent or nurse. It has already received and retained the impressions of their presence, and will lament by cries their absence. The beginning of speech is the beginning of the reproduction of these impressions, received and retained, and may be called a positive evidence of the action of the soul, since it requires an effort of the mind to retain or, as we commonly say, remember the sounds of the words, and a further effort to reproduce the sounds thus retained or remembered. At first only single unconnected words are brought forth, and these the easiest, simplest sounds. They are what I should call the words of necessity, forced from the infant's lips by its wants, and as yet do not show clearly the action of the soul.

This action is first clearly shown, long after speech has been acquired, by the questions children will ask. The retention of impressions received we know, then, is not the only object in their minds, but by becoming questioners, they become also reflectors, or reasoners. They inquire into causes in order to get at the truth. I have often been amused at the



remark made by parents and others, "What a child this is to ask questions!" or, "Who put a thing like this in the child's head?" The answer is, of course, simple enough. It is the power of the soul which begins to act in the child. It is at this stage very often that the child's intellectual growth is hindered and stunted by abrupt and unsatisfactory replies, or perhaps by receiving no answers whatever. Instead of judiciously fostering the intellectual development of the minds of these youthful questioners, we often repel and hinder this progress, simply because we do not care to be burdened with the task of explaining, even if we are able to, what the child desires to know. It is too much trouble—is our excuse—and a very poor excuse it is, it must be confessed.

In order to qualify our children for future usefulness, we have to imbue them with *knowledge*, which is the chief requisite for *action*. *Knowledge* is accounted more excellent than *action*, and the former can exist without the latter, though the latter is impossible without the former. Knowledge has been defined by Locke as the clear and certain perception of that which exists, or of truth and fact; the perception of the connection and agreement or disagreement and repugnancy of our ideas. It will thus readily be seen that children cannot be fit for action until they are imbued with knowledge, and as the acquisition of knowledge is only gradual, step by step, the exertion for action should be correspondingly slow. No child should be overtaken with action or work. It is on this principle that we may

compare the preceding generations to children, and because their knowledge was limited, the result was, that their intellectual labors were imperfect compared to those we perform. Again, knowledge is said to be acquired often by experience in contradistinction from knowledge acquired by study, but the difference of its acquisition consists only in method, for in the former case we are taught the power of our own soul, while in the latter it is by the power of the souls of our fellow-men. Knowledge acquired by experience is often simultaneous with action, and may be described as the consciousness of any particular fact, deed, or idea often repeated, and thus impressed upon our minds. Knowledge produces *Art*. Art in the abstract has been defined as not only the knowledge of *one* particular, but of *all* similar to it, which go to make up an universal. Therefore *Art* is superior to *Experience*, though it is begotten by it.

Though the senses constitute the principal means of knowledge of particulars, yet they do not show the causes and principles of these particulars, and the mere possession of these senses does not indicate the presence of the soul. It is what we call reason which directs the senses and enables the soul to enunciate *Truth*. According to Aristotle, reason has five qualities by which it does its work, either by affirmation or negation, and they are: *Art*, *Prudence*, *Science*, *Wisdom* and *Intellect*.

1. *Art*.—I have already stated it to be the knowledge of not only one part, but of all similar to it which tend to make up an universal. Schlegel's def-

inition of art is less expressive, yet worthy of notice. This philosopher defines art to be *fancy* become visible, assuming a bodily shape, word or sound. *Fancy* here, of course, expresses the faculty by which the mind forms images or representations, but as this word is used to express so many other ideas, as for instance, taste, love, thought, false notion, etc., its use here is rather apt to mislead the reader without entering into long explanation.

2. *Science*.—Regarding it, Schlegel's definition is more correct and expressive when he says that "in this beautiful world, according to its original acceptation, science is not regarded as already finished and mature, *but as an object of search, of a noble curiosity and of a pure enthusiasm for great and sublime truths*, while at the same time it implies the wise use of such knowledge." According to Aristotle, "Science is everywhere property of that which is first, and from which other things are suspended, and through which they are predicated."

3. *Wisdom* is the perception of the intellectual vision of causes and principles, not alone regarding mortal natures, but also eternal, immovable and intelligible natures. Wisdom cannot be perfect in man on earth, as with his limited senses he cannot clearly comprehend and grasp the designs of the Creator.

4. *Intellect* is that power of the soul by which we know the indemonstrable principles of demonstration. For instance, we can demonstrate that the earth moves round the sun, but we cannot demonstrate the principle of this motion.

5. *Prudence* is the habit of acting in accordance with true reason in things which may result in good or evil.



## CHAPTER IX.

THERE is one peculiarity which binds all created beings, animate as well as inanimate, heavenly as well as terrestrial, and this is their mobility. The boundless universe, the countless worlds, are incessantly moving. Comets, planets, moons and suns are never stationary, and it is a question, indeed, whether anything really exists which may be said to be stationary and never changing. Stones even grow and decay, like plants and animals. The air, the water, the soil, all change. It may be asked, Why are all these changes? What is the cause? In some instances science has demonstrated the causes for this change in nature, but much more as yet remains a mystery. Of late years when the laws of electricity came to be studied and investigated, it has also been demonstrated that electricity pervades the whole earth. But as yet this branch of Science is in its infancy, and we must leave to future generations the task of exploring this vast field.

But the question has often occurred to me whether there may not also be mental as well as physical electricity? Is this mental electricity not identical with magnetism which we find occasionally developed to an extraordinary degree in isolated cases? Is there electricity, for instance, in the eye? Does not



our tongue by its power of speech act as a conductor of electricity? Finally, is not speech itself a species of electricity? These are only hypotheses. But it has been assumed that magnetism is a part of human nature, the difference being that some men have it more developed than others. It is those who are more magnetic than others who need not use speech, but simply the eyes to attract others to them. Speech, indeed, may be electricity itself, and it certainly can be likened to the conductor of thought, or to the wire over which the electric spark passes from one soul into the other. If this be so, is not the soul itself the highest species of electricity? But in order to make its magnetism available, it must have means of attraction; language, or speech, is one of the principal ones, and the more perfect language becomes, the more perfect a conductor of thought it is likely to prove. This is a fact not to be slightly overlooked, and may account in a large degree for the advancement of civilization, step by step, from the days when the languages of the different nations were in their infancy to the present time.

May we not also say that when sleep overpowers us, our mental electricity is, for the time being, exhausted? that our dreams are but ephemeral flashes of this electric essence, and that we only wake again when we have re-acquired a sufficient supply of this electricity to last us for another limited period? Our bodily powers, of course, need repose, but does not the soul require it also, and even a greater degree of it? Is it not in constant action when we are

awake, even in those men who possess the lowest grade of intellect? Here, indeed, may be found the imperfection of man compared to our estimate of the Divine Spirit. This latter is ever active, ever at work, while man's spirit, his soul, is required to rest. The active powers of the soul are not constantly in motion, while the Divine Spirit must work incessantly in order that Nature should move in systematic order. A great deal more, no doubt, might be said on this subject, but I think I have shown that there may be some truth in this hypothesis of electricity; that it is not at all improbable that electricity enters into the organization of our system in a larger degree than we have been heretofore led to believe, and that, perhaps, it is the most important and necessary essence in man.

From this line of argument, of course, the deduction must be reached that our soul, though superior to anything on earth, is not perfect; that man, even if made in God's image, is but an instrument in God's hand to do this or that thing, and as we have ere this stated, it is on this ground that believers in predestination argue the correctness of their views. But we have already seen that this doctrine destroys all belief in the free-agency of man, and is dangerous to the very existence of society, in which state, it is apparently the design of the Creator that man should live. If we were but mere instruments, what use would there be in our being possessed of *reason*? Here, again, I have to ask the question, "Is reason an electric faculty? Is it spontaneous or acquired by thought?" Reason,

according to Schlegel, is one of the four principal branches of human consciousness — *understanding*, *will*, and *fancy* being the other three. Now if consciousness is spontaneous, if it is innate in man, it is, if the soul be electrical, also electric, and thence it follows that all its parts are electric. But I think, myself, that reason is generated by thought, and it is well known that a man must think ere he begins to reason. Again, reason grows by cultivation, and is strongest in those men who are more given to thinking, to investigating, to doubting; which latter is said to be the beginning of philosophical inquiry, since the ancients had a maxim, that those who investigated without having previously doubted, resembled those who are ignorant whither to proceed, and did not know whether or not they had found the object of their search. This necessity of doubting, indeed, precedes all philosophical inquiry and research, and Hooker, one of the greatest English divines, lays it down as a maxim, “that even in matters divine, concerning some things we may lawfully doubt and suspend our judgment.” This is certainly a broad basis, but it would be preferable to say that we may doubt in all things, in order to exercise our judgment and then by this means elucidate the truth.

## CHAPTER X.

THE question which is perhaps more engrossing than any other is, "Can the soul be perfected?" that is, "Can it be made purer and more refined?" It may at first look paradoxical to think that a spirit so near to God, if not part of God himself, should need schooling or training for its amelioration, but when we investigate the question fully and deeply, we must become convinced that like our body, our soul also stands in need of training. Of the existence of the soul outside of the body, of course we cannot undertake to speak, since we do not know how it exists, or where it exists, but are simply impressed with the conviction that it exists in some shape or other even after death. Of the existence of the soul, however, when it is animating and directing us, we have more positive evidence, and therefore a more legitimate field of inquiry.

Take man throughout the globe, in civilized countries, in semi-barbarism, or even in his savage state, and you will find that his soul is being trained. It is perfected according to the standard of perfection prevalent in the different localities in which he may reside. It is true that these standards differ, but all have a maximum and a minimum. The good and virtuous, in countries civilized or otherwise, are all



accounted everywhere to be of the highest grade, while vice and folly occupy, according to their degree, a correspondingly low station. The purer the soul is, and the more perfect our conduct, the higher we rise, not alone in the estimation of our fellow-men, but what is perhaps more satisfactory to us, in our own self-respect. On the contrary, the vicious have no self-esteem, even when by assuming the cloak of hypocrisy, they manage to retain the esteem of their fellow-men. A man who loses his self-esteem, or more correctly his respect for himself, has fallen indeed from his high position. Is he not to himself an object of contempt? Conscious of his own infamy, he is degraded by being surrounded by superior excellence. Such contrasts are of themselves a great incitement to virtue. Men do not like to be outdone. Every man has more or less ambition, and it often needs only a few (sometimes only one) bright examples to rouse up a spirit of emulation, to awaken the sluggard and hasten the tardy.

It is a common saying, but nevertheless a true one, that virtue brings its own reward. Our conscience is a good accountant. It weighs our actions as none of our fellow-men can weigh them, since it alone is conversant with our motives. When we have done wrong, it is not slow to tell us that there is a balance on the wrong side of its ledger; but the feeling of satisfaction we experience when we have done a good act, is worth more to us than the thanks, either in word or deed, which may be rendered to us by other men. How natural, for instance, does it appear, even to decline receiving these acknowledg-



ments. But do we decline the thanks of our own conscience? Our conscience is the most important guide of the soul. It is a true gauge, showing how high this soul has risen, or how low, perhaps, it may have fallen. Woe to the human being who heeds not its warning voice. Sooner or later this sturdy sentinel makes himself heard. Though temporarily silenced by the intensity of evil passions, it is never conquered, never subdued. Its voice may be hushed for a time, but persevering, untiring, and with reason at command, it sits in judgment on our deeds, and will accept no half-way apology, no extenuating circumstances for the wrongs we have done. The possession of conscience is, perhaps, the sole reason that comparatively so few wrongs are committed by men. Though our criminal records fill thousands of volumes, surely we can safely say that they are a thousandfold outweighed by our righteous deeds, of which no record is kept.

Thus it will be seen that conscience is a preventive agent, but it is even more. It guides us to virtue and morality by means of *ambition*. We see a good man, and admiring his good acts, our own conscience will soon admonish us to emulate his example. It will reprove us for any remissness in our efforts to reach excellence. A soul without a conscience would be the most dangerous gift the Creator could bestow on man, since it would take away the very guide for his journey through life, and a man—if there could be any such—who is not possessed of a conscience, might be truly said to have been born totally depraved. But as all men have

a conscience, it is only those who disregard its voice, who are inclined to become depraved, though they were born innocent. Society has endeavored to have as few as possible of such unfortunate men in its midst, and as nations have increased in civilization, education has done her share to inculcate in the youthful mind the obedience due to the voice of conscience.

At no time is the value of such training better illustrated than in the last moments of our stay on earth, while mortal life is ebbing away, atom by atom, while our blood is becoming sluggish in its circulation, while our body is preparing for death, and our soul—impatient as it were, for a flight into that shadowy land which our fancy has pictured to itself, and yet cannot describe—longs for a release from its prison bounds. In these moments the good man is calm and placid, confident of a better, purer state of existence; while the wrong-doer looks back on his work with ill satisfaction. I must confess, that the inculcated dread of future punishment has much to do with this latter feeling, and its apprehensions may work correspondingly on the fears of the dying man. But both punishments and rewards hereafter are uncertainties, of which we absolutely know nothing whatever. No one can with surety say what is to be our destiny, or rather, our soul's destiny hereafter. We only know that when death intervenes, body and soul separate. The body sinks into the ground, is decomposed, becomes clay once more, while the soul goes, we know not where. Were I to speak according to the theories of the different

theological systems, I might say that the soul returns to render an account to its Maker; but, however reasonable this may appear to most men, it is after all but hypothesis, an opinion undemonstrable by force of our limited understanding and faculties. I shall therefore leave any expression of opinion whether the soul goes, or does not go to court, to the fancy of my readers, and will only remark, that while humanity—that is, man—remains constituted as he is, none of us, be we ever so learned, ever so wise, will ever be able to lift the vail and tell what we see of the life hereafter.

## Part II.

### CHAPTER XI.

I HAVE come now to a most important part of this treatise, namely, the analysis of the progress made by humanity in religious belief. The aim and object of this work being to give merely brief, yet concise outlines, I cannot go into any extended details. The topic has been treated at great length by many distinguished authors, yet were an ordinary reader to attempt to read all that has been written on the subject, he would have a task before him requiring a vast deal of time to accomplish. In order to give an insight into this matter, I propose to review in brief some of the principal creeds prevalent among men, since historic times until the present day, and endeavor to point out—by no means a gracious task—their chief inconsistencies. At the same time, however, I will also give due credit to whatever appears to me to be good, and while I may have to condemn much, I hope also to be able to praise more.

And here, before I fairly enter on this subject, a word or two about myself may not be inappropriate. Many a reader of this work, before he will come to the last page, may perhaps ask himself, "Why has this man written such a book? Does he think to



overthrow all kinds of faith and all manner of creeds? Does he hope to do any good by his writings?" To all these and similar questions, I have but one answer to make, and it is a simple, straightforward answer. For years and years I have thought much and speculated much on this subject. In my days of labor, and in my hours of leisure, the subject has been uppermost in my mind. Thought, I have found out, cannot be repressed. I may have been diverted from this mental task at times, but sooner or later my mind ever returned to it. There was but one way for me to act. Thought not being repressible, had to be expressed. Thought forces us in fact to speech. We have in most cases to give expression by words to what we think. While few men may do this only to a limited extent, the great majority express their thoughts fully and unreservedly. Thoughts long withheld and pent up within our breasts, become indeed oppressive and a burden to the mind. Sooner or later we have to give expression to them. Thus it was in my case. Thus it happened that after years of mental suffering, oppressed with the weight of these thoughts, I came to put my pen to the paper, to lighten my burden, and to offer this outpouring of my soul to the readers of these pages.

There are in all creeds which have been prevalent, or are at this time prevalent on earth among men, a great many errors, errors which to call by no harsher name, may be termed *delusions*. These errors or delusions are instilled into our souls, either by the teachings of other men or are generated by wrong analogy pursued by our own thoughts. It would be



an enormous task to endeavor to give even the outlines of belief of each separate creed or sect. They all vary from each other, except in the one point, which is, that each claims to be the true faith, and each, in consequence, assails the others as false, unorthodox and heretical. It must not be denied, also, that each has more or less truth, but there is also a great deal of error which the opposing creeds have not been slow to point out in their endeavors to assert their own claim to superiority over the other systems. But with this at present I do not propose to deal. Our first inquiry, on the contrary, will be as to the first condition of religious belief among men.

After long investigation, I am led to the belief that, in the first place, men, when they had leisure to think of these things, when they came to the consciousness of superior power above them, believed that this power was exercised and controlled by one Supreme Ruler. It has already been seen that, the ruder and less educated men were, the fewer objects of adoration they had, and there can be no doubt that pure Deism was the first belief men entertained, when led to think at all on these matters. But as science was in its infancy, men knew but little of the laws of Nature, as, for instance, the composition of the solar system, and they deemed veneration due to everything that appeared undemonstrable, and therefore supernatural to them. Again, men saw that good and evil existed in the world, and it seemed unnatural to them, that this mysterious power, which their inward consciousness taught them was omnipresent and om-

nipotent, should be responsible for both good and evil. In place of investigating the causes, they fancied that, instead of one Deity, there must be two; one to do good, the other to work evil. The division once made, it was easy to make new ones, to make a god for winter and a different one for summer, to make a water-god and a land-god. Besides, men being unacquainted with science, had no just conception of the Supreme Being, but attributed to him the same passions, the same virtues, and the same vices which they had themselves. When men multiplied and nations were developed, there arose also different religious systems, each one of course suited to the physical condition, climate and wants of the country the different nations inhabited. Thus in Egypt the river Nile was regarded as sacred, and in India the Ganges is to this day regarded so by the Hindoos.

Though the number of these imaginary gods increased from day to day, the principle of Deism still survived. Wherever men investigated Nature, they saw order and harmony; whenever they compared Nature with the affairs of man, they saw in the latter discord and strife. They saw that these resulted from the multiplicity of rulers and directors, and hence it was but natural that the harmony of the universe should be due solely to its being directed by one Supreme Being, whose control must necessarily be beyond dispute, who could have no equal, who could have no beginning and no end. It sounds strange for me to write this. No man can imagine anything without a beginning or without an end.

Yet, nevertheless, it must be true of the Deity, for, were God to have had a beginning, we, perforce, answer, that there must have been one before him who made him. So of the world or existence hereafter, concerning which we may speculate in fanciful hypotheses, but never know anything definite while on earth ; we must lay aside all hope of learning what it was clearly the intention of the Almighty should be hidden from us.

I have already stated that the idea of a Supreme Being must have suggested itself to the soul by a contemplation of Nature. The law of analogy showed man that all the objects surrounding him, as well as he himself, owed their existence, their being, to some unknown cause. "What was that cause?" was naturally the next question. Men saw the sun and felt its power, and they conceived, necessarily, that the sun was the cause. This was one of the first delusions in man's intellectual progress, yet it was a step in advance, since it showed that man had begun to think, to reason and to investigate. The moon naturally had the second place assigned to it in man's estimation or veneration, and the other stars came to be regarded as minor deities. This star-worship is undoubtedly the oldest of pagan beliefs, but it had soon to give way to a system denoting a greater advance in the intellectual growth of the soul. The change of the seasons, for instance, and the varying degrees of power of the sun obliged men to investigate their causes, and men naturally argued that the sun must be controlled by some greater power, to which it in all probability owed its very existence.

Men asked, "Who made the sun?" This question suggested the presence, even though invisible, of a Supreme Being.

It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to state how long man was on earth ere he had advanced as far as this step in knowledge. Centuries probably elapsed before this took place; and indeed, if we compare the infancy of the human race with the infancy of individual man, we must come to the conclusion that it was not until men had been grouped into tribes and nations, that is, till they had multiplied to an extraordinary degree—till they had begun to amass wealth and secure leisure—that they were fitted to ask this question. When the first monotheistic system arose, men had already, therefore, emerged from barbarism. The question then being settled, that there was a Being who made the sun and the stars, men went farther, and asked, "Who is that Being?" "What is he like?" To this, men could make no satisfactory answer, but taking the highest excellence of creatures on earth, man himself, as a model, they made this Being a somewhat superior sort of man, who, it was natural, controlled the sun, moon, and the other stars, as men did the other creatures on earth. At the same time men acknowledged that this Being controlled mankind also, and that he directed all actions whether good or evil.

But here doubts must now have arisen in men's minds. Men could not believe that one and the same being would deal out both good and evil, and hence they imagined, readily enough, that instead of one



Being, or one God, there were in reality, two ; one who worked the good, and the other who worked evil. Trace the different systems of Paganism and we find this verified and illustrated. Take, for instance, the oldest monotheistic system, that of Zoroaster. This celebrated philosopher saw the existence of good and evil. Hence he attributed to *Ormuzd* (the Supreme Spirit) a power for working both good and evil. Zoroaster's disciples went further than their master. They assumed the separate co-existence both of a Good Spirit and of an Evil one. If we turn from Persia to Hindostan, we find this delusive division of the Supreme Being carried still further. First there appears *Brahma*, the Creator, who as soon as his work is finished, is summarily set aside by *Vishnu*, the Preserver, and *Siva*, the Destroyer. Likewise we find in the old Scandinavian mythology, the mighty *Odin* placed first as the Supreme Being. But not long after appears the son of *Odin* and *Frigga*, named *Thor*, who is the god of Mischief, and is placed in rivalry with *Odin* himself. Our North American Indians have also both a Good and an Evil Spirit, who are supposed to work in opposition to each other. But are they any worse in this respect than their more enlightened white brethren, who, while loudly proclaiming their faith in one God, who is all good, have actually in their creed a Devil, who is all wicked and powerful beyond belief? This Devil makes all the mischief on earth, and has control even of the souls of wicked men after their death !

It seems, indeed, to have been reserved for us to



set up in this respect the most erroneous hypothesis in the midst of civilization. The old Homeric Tartarus is surely a paradise compared with the Hell as described by the ecclesiastical pen of modern times, and the absurdity of this picture is only surpassed by the readiness with which men of intelligence can credit so shameful a libel on an all-merciful, as well as an all-powerful Creator. But, as we shall see hereafter, it is a hard task to eradicate error engrafted on the minds of men almost from their very birth. Most men, indeed, are willing, if not forced by external causes, such as laborious occupations, which prevent them from investigating for themselves, to accept as true and hence worthy of their belief, what is offered to them by others. Very few, comparatively speaking, will undertake to investigate this subject for themselves. Very few men will be found, even in this day, who can understand that those things which men account to be evil, are but blessings in disguise. To illustrate: It would not seem at first sight, that a horrible murder could be anything but evil. The very slaying of a human being is in itself a great crime, but Nature, or rather God, turns this evil into good. Why and how he does so, are questions difficult to answer, because of the multiplicity of circumstances which have to be taken into account which we only partly know, or which we are ignorant of altogether. Nor will I here be understood to assert, or even imply, that human punishment should not be inflicted on the offenders, on the supposition that their evil deeds will be turned to, or result in, good in the end. While man is unac-

quainted with God's will, he has to be guided by the laws which Society has made for its own protection. If this were not the case, evil-disposed persons would be easily induced to set all laws at defiance, and the community would be at the mercy of the boldest and most courageous ruffians. The existence of crime must be ascribed solely to the imperfection of human laws, and also to the imperfection of their execution. The laws of nature, on the contrary, besides being perfect, execute themselves, solely, it may be said, to bring into order again so many of them as have been violated by our conduct.

## CHAPTER XII.

WE have already seen that men adored the sun and the other stars, and that afterwards, when brought to the consciousness or conviction of Supreme Creative Power above them, they made a division between a Power which worked Good, and a Power which wrought Evil. But once arrived at this stage, men did not rest contented with having two or three gods, but as civilization advanced, so the number of their gods multiplied to so great an extent, that it required a long catalogue to enumerate them. These gods furthermore were regularly classified according to their supposed power and influence over the destinies of human beings, as well as other objects in nature. The mythology of the ancient nations, though similar in many respects, differs considerably, according to the ideas and wants of the different nations. Sometimes, indeed, gods were transplanted from one system and from one nation into those of others, as for instance, the adoption of the worship of Baal at Samaria from Phœnicia, or that of Hermes at Rome from Greece. It would be almost an endless task to go over all these old mythological systems and name the different gods and demi-gods which each of their systems embraced; and I will, therefore, have to confine my-

self to a brief review of the religious system of the most noteworthy nations. Before doing so, I must allude to a division of polytheists, namely, those who worshipped invisible gods, and those who worshipped idols. The worship of idols, though the most degrading system, no doubt denotes a considerable advance in civilization, as it shows that man was already capable of producing what, in most cases, were works of art, like the Sphynx, the statue of Memnon, the Winged Bulls, etc., which no barbarous people could have produced, and naturally shows that men must have had their minds directed to the investigation of the Deity. These old idols also show the different feelings the ancients had in regard to their gods. Was a mild, good god wanted, the sculptor or designer would fashion a man with a pleasing, agreeable face, while, on the contrary, a god of terror would be represented as a picture of hideousness. A double-headed god represented extraordinary power, and wings were added in some cases to notice the capacity for superior celerity. Often a human head was placed on the body of an ox, or of a lion. Nor were men always content with the adoration of inanimate idols. Snakes, crocodiles, etc., were regarded as sacred by the Egyptians, as worthy of worship, and were not allowed to be molested. Fear, in this instance, was the cause of this veneration. These animals had their feast-days and their sacrifices, and to speak wantonly or lightly of these supposed deities, was a heinous offence in the eyes of the law. Indeed, all the ancients had laws framed for the punishment of skeptics, and Socrates,



the greatest philosopher of his day, was charged with speaking lightly of the gods, and on his conviction, had to suffer the death penalty. Alcibiades, likewise, was accused of having desecrated the statues of Hermes, and consequently deprived of his command of the army and ostracized.

For the purpose of a review of the principal systems of religion and worship among the ancients, I have selected the following :

1. The Assyrian, which was followed also by the Medes and Persians.
2. The Egyptian.
3. The Indian.
4. The Chinese.
5. The Phœnician, which was transplanted to Carthage.
6. The Hellenic.
7. The Roman.
8. The Teutonic.

There are many more than the systems I have enumerated here ; in fact, their number almost exceeds belief, and I may have, perhaps, occasion to allude to some of these incidentally, but it would be too great, and at the same time too unprofitable, a task, were I to attempt to notice all these exploded delusions.



## CHAPTER XIII.

ROLLIN, while speaking of the religion of the Assyrians, and their successors, says, with great good sense, that "the most ancient and general idolatry in the world is that wherein the sun and moon were the objects of worship. This idolatry, as we have already seen, was founded upon a mistaken gratitude, which, instead of ascending to the Deity, stopped short at the veil which concealed him, and thus was diverted from the Creator to one of his creations." The ancient worship of the Assyrians, and subsequently of the Medes and Persians, was the worship of the sun, and subsequently, as was natural enough, of fire. The last remnant of this worship still exists at this day in Persia among the Parsees, who claim; though erroneously, to follow the creed instituted by Zoroaster. This philosopher, as I have already stated, maintained that God was a duality, working either good or evil. The Magi, his successors, made the separation complete by maintaining that there were two gods, namely, *Ormuzd*, the good spirit, and *Ariman*, the bad spirit. As a matter of course, there were built to the worship of each god separate temples, to which were assigned separate priests. Nor did they (the Magi) stop at this, but soon created other gods, who were in their turn honored with temples, priests and worshippers. This was done on

the principle that the more complicated the system of religion becomes—the less it is understood by the majority of men, the more sacred it becomes, on account of its mystery, and the less liable it is to sustain injury by the doubts of skeptical inquirers. This system lasted and prospered like the rank weeds in neglected gardens for fully six hundred years. Then there arose a second Zoroaster, who attempted and accomplished a well-needed reformation.

According to all the accounts which have come down to us, he must have been a man possessed of large wisdom, great prudence, and still greater courage, for the Magi, whom he had necessarily to oppose, were adversaries of no mean order. They composed a separate caste of the greatest influence, both in political and social life. They were, in addition to this, the only body of men who in those rude times devoted themselves to the acquisition of knowledge. They kept, as Rollin observes, this knowledge to themselves, in order to maintain their power. They were statesmen, priests, philosophers, astronomers and physicians, and the existence of the State, and necessarily the control of it, rested with them. They made and unmade kings at pleasure, and these kings they made must have been but puppets in their hands.

The second Zoroaster, therefore, was undoubtedly a more important personage than it is generally believed, and his reforms were probably at first discountenanced and frowned down by this powerful priesthood. He taught the existence of a Supreme Being, independent and self-existing, but he retained

*Ormuzd*, the good spirit, and *Ariman*, the evil spirit, in his system, though he assigned them the subordinate positions of angels under the Supreme Being. He taught further the doctrine of an everlasting combat or struggle between these two spirits, and this in reality reduced his Supreme Deity to an effete ruler, who, having created all, left to these two spirits the government of the universe. There is a close resemblance in this system to that of the Brahmins, of which I will speak hereafter. As a fitting capstone to his religious instruction, Zoroaster maintained the doctrine of a general resurrection at the end of the world, appointing a day of judgment when all men were to be judged in accordance with their works. Thereupon the angel of darkness would go with his disciples and followers into a world of their own, where they would be enveloped in everlasting gloom and night, as a punishment for the evils committed. On the contrary, all good men, under the direction of the angel of light, would go into a separate world of everlasting light, as a reward for their virtue, and the separation between darkness and light would ever afterwards be final. It is very remarkable to observe how much of this doctrine of Zoroaster has crept into the more modern systems of religion. This everlasting punishment of the wicked, the rewarding of the good, the resurrection, the judgment day, heaven and hell, are as much believed in at this day as they were in the palmiest day of Nineveh's existence. The dogmas are all similar, while only the names and minor particulars have been changed to suit the changes of the times.

## CHAPTER XIV.

IF we go westward from the plains of Mesopotamia to the banks of the Nile, we shall find, instead of a dualistic deity, Pantheism prevailing to the largest degree. The only resemblance between the religious systems of the two different countries is found in the caste-system. The priesthood in Egypt, as in Assyria, Media and Persia, was hereditary, and its members had, like the Magi, an exclusive monopoly of learning. The accounts which have come down to us through the Bible and the writings of Herodotus and other Greek authors, all assign a high antiquity to the Egyptian commonwealth, and mention particularly its high degree of civilization. Egypt was already a populous country in Abraham's day, was ruled by a king whose wealth in cattle and servants is expressly mentioned in the account of Abraham's residence there. Considering that this took place some four thousand years ago, it must be fair to presume that the account which the Egyptian priests themselves gave of the antiquity of their nation is by no means exaggerated. The monuments which have survived this ancient nation are of the most stupendous order, and the great soldier who seventy years ago, in his memorable order of the day, told his Gallic soldiers that forty centuries



looked down on them, considerably underrated the age of these pyramids.

Though there is no positive proof to back up the assertion, still it may not be wrong to assume, that the Pantheism which already prevailed in Egypt in Abraham's time was not the original religion, that there was a more ancient system, which was simpler, but which the priests gradually either changed or overthrew altogether. The new system manipulated by the priests for their interest, increased to a frightful extent in course of time. Ere long each city, town or village in the country had its own gods, and, of course, different worship and different festivals. The only gods who were worshipped throughout the land were Osiris and Isis. The dogma of transmigration of souls, which the Egyptians believed in, precluded, of course, a belief in a world hereafter; though Herodotus,\* curiously enough, alludes to the account of Rhampsinitus descending into Hades and playing dice with Ceres, and a little further on, he states, that the Egyptians say that Ceres and Bacchus hold the chief sway in the infernal regions, and that the Egyptians were the first ones who asserted the doctrine, that the soul is immortal, and that when the body perishes in one, it enters into some other animal, constantly springing into existence; and when it has passed through the different kinds of terrestrial, marine and aerial beings, it again enters into the body of a man that is born, and that this revolution is made once in three thousand years.

It seems almost incredible that a people giving

\* Book ii., Sec. 122.



such high evidence of civilization as the old Egyptians, could have believed such a tissue of nonsense. Yet such is the fact, and I could adduce many more examples to prove that progress in learning and arts is very often attended with increase of superstition, especially when the State, with its power, intervenes and stifles liberty of thought, conscience and speech. Of the numerous deities, animate as well as inanimate, which were worshipped in Egypt, it is needless to speak. Its influence over other countries, however, was considerable. The Jews, the Phœnicians, the Greeks and the Romans, all, in their turn, borrowed much from the Egyptian system, and traces of it, as we shall see hereafter, are yet to be found even among the civilized nations of Europe and America.

## CHAPTER XV.

THE religions of Hindostan—Buddhism and Brahmanism—are the oldest theological systems of any on the face of the earth which are prevalent at this day, and more than one-third of the human race belong to them. They are pure and simple products and developments of Eastern Asia, one of the most densely populated parts of the world, where necessarily the accumulation of wealth is in the hands of a few, where the government has from immemorial times been nothing but despotism, and where the mass of the people, if not slaves to the soil, were compelled, in order to subsist, to give all their time to labor. As a necessary consequence the masses are kept in profound ignorance and darkness. To add to this, the division of the nation into *Castes* has necessarily tended to degrade the great majority of Hindoos to as great an extent as the Egyptians were in olden times. The great majority of the people were the laborers, the real workers, the *Bais* (merchants) and *Sudras* (laborers), while the *Brahmans* (priests) and *Chultree* (warriors) lived on the earnings of the two first classes. The origin of these Castes cannot positively be determined, neither can the time when they were instituted by men.

Buddhism, which is the oldest of the two creeds,

teaches and inculcates the transmigration of souls. A man, or a being, can turn by degrees and is re-born from a clod to a divinity. There are a hundred and thirty-six hells in the Buddhist religion in which the evil-doers are born over again, while, at the same time, there are as many heavens to furnish new birth-places for the virtuous. This transmigration is, however, terminated by *Nivoana*, which means Oblivion. But man, or rather the soul, has to go through thousands of changes ere his misery is ended, and he is finally allowed to be obliterated. No existence of a Supreme Being enters into the Buddhist religion. The *Buddha* himself is not a god, but only represented as the ideal of what a man may become. Though deficient in elevation of thought, Buddhism nevertheless inculcates a system of morality which would do no discredit to any code. Brotherly love, charity and sympathy are essential duties enjoined by the *Buddha* upon his followers, and on the whole, it has been justly observed, that Buddhism is more catholic, is more tolerant than Brahmanism. How it happened that this creed was displaced in Hindostan by Brahmanism, and why it was, that it flourished and still flourishes in the Eastern portion of Asia, especially in Thibet and China, I will not here stop to inquire.

Brahmanism, the later religion of India, and the chief creed of its people even at the present time, may be said to have originated at first from Monotheism. As I have already stated, Brahma, the Creator, is the Chief Deity, who, having done his work, resigns the reins of power to *Vishnu*, the

Preserver, and *Siva*, the Destroyer. The analogy between this and Zoroaster's system is sufficiently striking to need more than a passing notice. As elsewhere, the dualistic system led in course of time to polytheism. The number of deities increased as fast in India as the people itself. To-day the lower classes of India are computed at 150,000,000 souls. About one-half of the whole population, is steeped in the lowest degree of polytheism. That this deplorable state results from the *Caste* system, which, while it leaves the majority of the people uneducated, gives to a ridiculously small minority all the power, cannot well be controverted. The Brahmins of India seem, like the majority of priests in all other countries, to have been more intent on preserving their own supremacy than on teaching their people the truth. They therefore bound the chain of superstition tighter and closer around the unfortunate Hindoos, and while they thus made themselves powerful and rich, they sank their countrymen into the most deplorable state of degradation. They are really the cause of India's subjection to a foreign power. They, the chosen teachers of their nation, for fear of progress and loss of power, kept their pupils in barbarism. Almost everywhere else on the face of the earth is there a *national spirit*, but such a feeling is unknown to India. This great country has been ruled for centuries by foreigners, and it is only within late years that natives under British rule have been employed as subordinates in the civil administration of the empire. Such a thing as liberty is entirely foreign to the Hindoos.



Had the Brahmins done their duty, this great country, so favored by nature, would be to-day a free and mighty empire, instead of being a dependency of a small island thousands of miles distant from it. Nor can these faithless preachers plead ignorance themselves, for they did not even believe what they preached. They were sufficiently enlightened; but with the selfishness of an hereditary priesthood, they feared the loss of power, if the mass of the people were to receive instruction. The proofs that the Brahmins had a true conception of the Supreme Being, are furnished by themselves, and are very numerous. As an illustration I will only give the following apotheosis from the great epic the Bhagavadgîtâ,\* which is as elevated in thought as the most lofty writings of our own authors. It is in these words:

“O mighty Being, who art the prime Creator, eternal God of Gods, the World’s Mansion. Thou art the incorruptible Being, distinct from all things transient. Thou art before all Gods, the ancient *Pooroosh* (vital soul), and the Supreme Supporter of the Universe. Thou knowest all things, and art worthy to be known; thou art the Supreme Mansion, and by thee, O Infinite Form, the Universe was spread abroad. Reverence be unto thee before and behind; reverence be unto thee on all sides. O thou, who art all in all, Infinite is thy power and thy glory. Thou art the father of all things, animate and inanimate. Thou art the wise instructor of the Whole, worthy to be adored. There is none like unto thee;

\* See Article *Religion* in Appendix to Robertson’s *India*.



where, then, in the three worlds is there one above thee? Wherefore I bow down; and with my body prostrate upon the ground, crave thy mercy, Lord! worthy to be adored, for thou shouldest bear with me, even as a father with his son, a friend with his friend, a lover with his beloved."

Such was the Brahminical conception of the Deity; yet regardless of the knowledge they had of the truth, they chose, in order to perpetuate their power, to plunge their nation into the wild chaos of polytheism. How very strange does it look when we compare their acts to their words! The men who built the pagodas at Elephanta and Tanjore for the worship of idols, are the same men who speak of God as follows:

"As God is immaterial, he is above conception; *as he is invisible, he can have no form*; but from what we behold of his works, we may conclude that he is *eternal, omnipotent, knowing all things and is present everywhere*."

This does not sound much like paganism, and yet it is the language of men who were the greatest promoters of idol-worship, of men who strenuously insisted on the vigorous performance of the thousand and one minutiae of the ritualism they had established. Their conception was correct, but their teachings were the greatest and most scandalous imposition.

## CHAPTER XVI.

CHINA, the most populous country on the earth, is the next in the order of our review. I have already spoken of Buddhism, as having been brought into the Flowery Kingdom from Hindostan, and it is to-day the principal religion of the State. As the Buddha ignores, as we have seen before, the existence of a Supreme Being, teaching that future oblivion is the state of greatest happiness, it is clear, therefore, that the belief of the Chinese is entirely materialistic. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls is carried further in China than anywhere else. According to Chinese Buddhism, the human soul may be transplanted into an ape, an ox, or a toad even. It is only according to the soul's conduct in life that transmigration changes. Is man good and virtuous, the soul is born anew in some gentle shape; is he vicious and wicked, he may become, after his human death, a crawling insect or a venomous serpent. As regards the Deity, there is no trace of any such exalted idea as the Brahmins privately entertained in regard to the Supreme Being. Nor does Confucius, the great national teacher of the Chinese, whose teachings are still followed by the upper classes, give a better idea of god than the priests of Buddha do. In fact, he seems to have been fearful of entering the

field of investigation, shrinking as it were, from speculations on the hereafter, and he simply contents himself with advising men as to their earthly career. He says, for instance :

“I teach you nothing but what you might learn yourselves, viz.: the observance of the three fundamental laws of relation, between sovereign and subject, father and child, husband and wife; and the five capital virtues—universal charity, impartial justice, conformity to ceremonies and established usages, rectitude of heart and mind, and pure sincerity.”

All this is very well as far as it goes, but may we not ask whether such limited teachings can, or ought to satisfy the human soul? It is simply setting forth the doctrine of passive obedience without giving encouragement or liberty to go and search farther into the mysteries of nature, and into the causes and objects of man's existence on earth. That this doctrine of contentment, of simple acceptation of fate, has to a great degree upheld the political as well as the religious institutions of this great empire, must be apparent to every student of history. It is hardly a wonder that so submissive a faith should prove a useful ally to the despotic rulers of China, and that it should have been exalted to the dignity of the State religion. But that it did not satisfy the majority of the people is proved by the fact that Buddhism, a strange creed coming from India, should have been able to attract to its temples the majority of Confucius's own countrymen. Even to the Chinese, such a religion as that of Buddha, with its frightful creed, was preferable to the mild, submis-

sive, negative teachings of Confucius. The doctrines of Confucius, it seems to me, are the embodiment of conservatism. Nothing must be changed in the established order of things. The most obnoxious government is to be upheld, the most ridiculous usages have to be followed. There is to be no progress; only submission. These teachings have made China what she is, in a social as well as a political view. The art of printing, the manufacture of gunpowder, or of paper, for instance, were, till Europe broke the blockade and opened the country to the world, as rude and as primitive in China as their first inventors had left them. It is only by the force of barbaric bayonets that China has been forced in spite of herself, to leave the old beaten path for a more progressive one.



## CHAPTER XVII.

THERE has but little authentic information come down to us regarding Phœnicia and its more powerful offspring, Carthage. Save a few coins and votive tablets, what we find in the old Greek authors and in the Bible is all that we know of Sidon and Tyre, while the account of the Carthaginians left to us by the Roman historians is hardly more ample. The Phœnicians were of the Semitic race, and, inhabiting the same country as the Hebrews, must have been in close connection with them. Indeed the allusions to such an alliance are frequent in the Bible, and as the Phœnicians were a sea-faring nation, while the Hebrews mainly followed agricultural pursuits, the *entente cordiale* between them must have been both natural and profitable. Their language, too, was probably nearly the same, while some of their customs, such as circumcision, it is expressly stated in Herodotus, they both learned from the Egyptians. We have the authority of Herodotus for stating, that the Phœnicians emigrated to Syria from the Eastern shore of the Red Sea, whence it is more than probable that they were driven out by their powerful Egyptian neighbors. Certain it is that Herodotus saw statues to Hercules both in Egypt and in Tyre, thus proving that the Phœnicians were once, if not dwell-



ing in Egypt, living close enough to it to adopt some of the Egyptian deities. It is also not at all improbable that the emigration of the Phœnicians led to that of the Hebrews out of Egypt, for Egypt then was too thickly populated, and the years of famine recorded in the Bible, denote plainly that the land did not suffice for the wants of the inhabitants, and that the promise of a man sitting elsewhere beneath his own vine and fig-tree, was in those days as great an inducement to emigrate as one hundred and sixty acres of land in the West are with us to-day.

As usual, the time of this Phœnician emigration is difficult to determine. The ancients all claimed a higher antiquity for man than we do. The following passage from Herodotus is exceedingly obscure on the subject, but it is the only one upon which anything like a calculation can be based :

“ But Hercules is one of the ancient gods of the Egyptians, and as they themselves say, it was 17,000 years before the reign of Amasis, when the number of their gods was increased from eight to twelve, of which Hercules was accounted one.

“ And *being desirous of obtaining* CERTAIN *information* from whatever source I could, *I sailed to Tyre in Phœnicia*, having learned that there was there a temple dedicated to Hercules, and I saw it richly adorned with a great variety of offerings, and in it were two pillars, one of fine gold and the other of emerald stone, both shining exceedingly at night. Conversing with the priests of this god, I inquired how long the temple had been built, and I found that neither did they agree with the Greeks, for they said that

the temple had been built at the time when Tyre was founded, and that 2,300 years had elapsed since the foundation of Tyre."

Now Tyre itself was a colony of Sidon, and consequently considerably younger. It must, therefore, be assumed, that four thousand years have elapsed since the foundation of Tyre, and nearly five thousand since that of Sidon. Before that time the Phœnicians, probably wishing to escape the Egyptian yoke, and more especially the forced labor on the Pyramids, must have emigrated while yet in a state of semi-civilization. It was but natural that they as well as the Hebrews should have adopted some of the Egyptian customs and the worship of some of their gods. Whether this Hercules of which Herodotus speaks is the Baal mentioned in the Bible, cannot be determined with certainty, though it is more than probable that such was the case. The people, judging from Herodotus's description of this temple, must have been extremely wealthy, far more so than the Greeks were at that time, for it was not till the days of Pericles that Athens, the wealthiest Greek town, began to enrich herself partly by commerce and partly also by tribute levied from her so-called allies. Hercules, or Baal, was perhaps the chief deity of the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, but the religious system of these nations was as polytheistic as those of the other Semitic nations except the Hebrews. Indeed the Carthaginians had five or six *orders* of deities, and Polybius has transmitted to us a treaty of peace, concluded between Philip, son of Demetrius, king of Macedonia, and the

Carthaginians, which sheds some light on the subject. "This treaty," it is solemnly declared, "is concluded in the presence of Jupiter, Juno and Apollo; in the presence of the demon or genius of the Carthaginians, of Hercules and Iolaus; in the presence of Mars, Triton and Neptune; in the presence of all the *confederate* gods of the Carthaginians; and of the sun, the moon, and the earth; in the presence of the rivers, meads and waters; in the presence of *all those gods who possess Carthage.*"

The frightful immolation of children to Baal or Moloch, which was practiced alike by the Phœnicians and Carthaginians, and at times even by the Hebrews, shows their conception of a god of wrath, so often mentioned in the Bible, rather than of an all-merciful Creator, who looks upon men as his children. It does not speak well for their advancement in civilization, and Dionysius, the tyrant of Syracuse, did himself honor when he stipulated in his treaty with the Carthaginians, "that they should offer no more human sacrifices." Of late years, owing to extensive researches near Tunis, on the site of old Carthage, we have learned more of the religions, manners and customs of this once powerful nation; but it is only by the aid of monuments. Their literature has entirely perished, and were it not for the scanty means of information the authorities I have quoted have given us, we should know next to nothing of the oldest commercial nation of historic times.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

WE come now to consider the religious customs and the conceptions of the Deity of one of the most remarkable races of antiquity; namely, that of the Hellenes. Our old guide Herodotus relates the following:

“Whence each of the gods sprung, whether they existed always, and of what form they were, was so to speak, unknown till yesterday. For I am of opinion that Hesiod and Homer lived four hundred years before my time, and these were they who framed a theogony for the Greeks, and gave names to the gods, and assigned to them honors and arts, and declared their several forms.”

Perhaps no mythological system has been better preserved and also more closely studied than the Grecian. The system is one of great harmony and beauty. Though it is polytheistic to a large degree, and the gods are numbered by hundreds, they do not come in contact with each other. Each god has his own sphere of usefulness assigned to him, while at the same time in Zeus we can recognize still the traces of the original monotheism of the one Supreme Being who guides and controls the universe. The Hellenic race, or at least the people who inhabited Greece and the ancient isles, and sent colo-



nies to Italy, Thrace and Asia Minor, cannot be considered as a purely distinct race. Besides the Hellenes, the same system comprised Pelasgians, Phœnicians and colonists who peopled other countries. Hence the religious worship of the Greeks was a mixture, to which each nationality contributed a part. The gods of Hellas multiplied with the influx of new comers, and when Hesiod and Homer, as Herodotus informs us, framed a theogony for the country, there must have been felt among the Greeks the necessity for simplifying and putting into something like harmony, the different religious systems prevalent among the people. As the country moreover was small, and communications between the different cities and towns easy and rapid, the bond of union necessarily was stronger than it would be in countries like Egypt or India, where it required long and tedious journeys to go from one place to another. In addition to this, the institution of the Olympian and other games and the oracles furnished suitable opportunities for the inhabitants of Hellas to exchange views, to reconcile differences and to cement the bonds of union. Whether Hesiod and Homer really framed this theogony for the Greeks, as Herodotus says, is not altogether clear, but at all events they had a large share in the work. The functions of the priesthood were open to all men. Priests, as a separate caste, as we have already seen in India and Egypt, do not figure in the religious system of Hellas, for the Greek mind had too much of a democratic tendency to allow the existence of an hereditary sacerdotal oligarchy. Indeed the magistrates



often performed the functions of the priests in the public religious exercises, while the head of each family was charged with the exercise and supervision of religious duties at home.

The favorite god of the Greeks seems to have been Apollo, and his oracles, where through his servants he made known his divinations, are numerous. The most famous of these, of course, is Delphi, in Northern Greece, which may be said to have formed the nucleus for the religious Greek world. Hither came the representatives of the Hellenic commonwealths, as well as private individuals, for counsel before undertaking any important matter. Nor did the Greeks alone go to Delphi; we also know through history, that the princes of Asia, such as Cræsus, for instance, sent to the Pythoness for advice, which, by the way, seems always to have been liberally paid for. But Apollo himself, though the favorite god of the Greeks, was only one of the twelve chief deities, to wit:

Jupiter,	Pluto,
Mars,	Juno,
Mercury,	Minerva,
Apollo,	Venus,
Vulcan,	Diana,
Neptune,	Ceres.

Then there was a second class of demi-gods, ever increasing in number, like the saints in the Roman Catholic church of our day. Every trade had its protecting deity, and was honored accordingly. Even Socrates is described as ending his days with the exclamation:

“Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius (the god of medicine). Discharge that vow for me, and pray do not forget it.”

Though to Jupiter was assigned the first place among the gods, he is himself the son of Chronos (Time), thus showing that the Greek theogony must have been in the first place monotheistic, and that it was changed gradually into polytheism, owing mainly to the advent of new comers, either from Egypt or Asia, who brought with them not alone the art of letters, but also the gods which they had worshipped in the homes they had left. But this polytheism, degrading as it doubtless was, is far superior to that of the Phœnicians and Egyptians. Human sacrifices were abhorrent to the Hellenic race, and the worship of Baal was never instituted in Greece. The offerings the Hellenes made, consisted principally of money, golden or silver vessels, and works of art. The temples were so overflowing with these treasures, that more than once they fell victims to the cupidity of princes and armies. Delphi was plundered and sacked several times. Nero carried away from it to Rome over five hundred statues, and yet in Pliny's days there were over three thousand statues remaining there. The temple of Diana at Ephesus, burned by Herostratus on the day Alexander the Great was born, was one of the wonders of the age; so likewise was the temple of Minerva at Athens; and both were filled with the gifts of the faithful. The priests, though they encouraged this liberality, had yet only a temporary interest, and did not exercise any political influence, nor did they have

any charge of public education. Over this the State watched, herself, with jealous care, and in Athens, under Solon's law, no son was bound to support the parent who had neglected to educate him. This elementary education laid the foundation for the philosophical schools, which to a great degree destroyed the superstition engendered by the polytheistic system, of which we shall speak more fully in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

I HAVE come now to speak of the philosophical schools of the Greeks and of their influence upon posterity. Much as we owe the Hellenic race, it may be safely said, that if we had borrowed nothing else from them but their philosophy, we should still be more indebted to them than to any other people. The most remarkable feature we have to notice at the outset, is the fact, that it is in the Greek colonies in Asia Minor and Italy, where we find philosophy flourishing long before it became a favorite study in the mother country. Thus, for instance, Thales, commonly called the father of Greek philosophy, was a native of Miletus, a Greek city in Asia Minor, and, moreover, of Phœnician origin. Heraclitus, another philosopher, flourished in Ephesus, and Anaxagoras, the most illustrious name in philosophy before Socrates, was born at Alazomone, an Ionic city in Lydia; Xenophanes, another native of Asia Minor, who fled from there when Colophon, his native city, was taken by the enemy, went not to Greece, but to Italy, and founded at Elea the Ionic-Italian philosophic school. Pythagoras, better known than Xenophanes, was born at Samos, one of the islands on the coast of Asia Minor, and finding tyranny established by Polycrates on his return from his travels, went to Crotona,



in Southern Italy, where he founded the celebrated philosophical school bearing his name.

All this tends to prove to me that the colonies of Hellas must have been, before the Persian war, richer and more prosperous, and consequently further advanced in learning than the States and cities of Greece, which originally founded these colonies. Nor is this unnatural, when we consider the difference in the physical geography of Hellas, compared with that of Asia Minor or Southern Italy. While in the latter countries agriculture is attended with less labor, and the earth yields more abundant returns, the mountains of the Peloponnesus, of Attica, of Bœotia and other parts of Greece made agriculture a more difficult task, and the people attended more to rearing cattle and sheep—a nomadic occupation—than tilling the soil. This is in fact as true of the Greece of to-day as it was of the Hellas of old. While the rearing of cattle promotes migratory habits, agriculture, on the contrary, fixes men to the soil and promotes a regular mode of life, besides encouraging the more rapid acquisition of wealth. Moreover, the intercourse of the Greeks in the mother country with other nations was not of an extended character until the Persian invasion. It was this event which directed the attention of the Grecian States, and especially of Athens, to conquests abroad. As a necessary consequence, when Greek commerce became extended, wealth began to flow into the treasuries of the cities on the sea-coast. The Athenians made but a small sacrifice when, acting on the advice of Themistocles, they left their houses at the ap-



proach of the Persian army under Xerxes. But, on the contrary, when Athens had become rich under the administration of Pericles, they could no longer be induced to leave their homes. Instead of doing this, they stoutly defended their wealth as long as they could against the Lacedæmonian army under Lysander.

Though the philosophical schools of Athens became in course of time the most celebrated in the world, it was not till the age of Pericles—till the city, as we have already seen, had become wealthy—that we hear of philosophical schools prospering on Attic soil. Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno and others associated with Athenian philosophy, never could have flourished at Athens, had not Miltiades, Themistocles, Aristides, Cimon and Pericles paved the way for them. Though the Ionic school, which flourished in Asia and Italy, was much the older, it was decidedly inferior in ability to its successor, the Athenian. This improvement indicates the progress in civilization which the Greeks had made from the days of Homer to the end of the Peloponnesian war. While Thales and his immediate successors had only their own intellect to guide them in their investigations, the later schools had the scientific acquisitions of centuries to assist them. It is not surprising, therefore, that while the Ionic philosophers sought to find in water, fire or air, the origin of existence, and consequently leaned toward pantheism, the school of the Athenians under Socrates was better able to discern the truth and to proclaim the existence of a Supreme Being, to whom

the origin of existence was to be ascribed. Still, however, the more advanced the Athenian school was over the Ionic, its existence was rather one of sufferance, than that of an institution sanctioned by the State. The reasons for this can be readily explained by looking at the condition of the people. Though the upper classes, who had leisure and facilities for education, may have abhorred the paganism of the age, though they may have been skeptics, still the great mass of the people were not by education fitted to break through the traditionary superstition and discern the truth. It ought not, therefore, to be surprising to us to read that Socrates and Aristotle were accused of impiety, that the former actually had to suffer death, and that the latter would have shared the same fate had he not saved his life by a timely flight from Athens.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, and even persecutions, the seed planted by these schools grew and ripened in course of time. Though polytheism for centuries continued to be the State religion, its power gradually declined and became weakened, and so effete and obsolete did it become, that when finally it was supplanted by Christianity, it gave way almost without a struggle. Its day of usefulness had passed, its mission had been fulfilled. Philosophy, on the contrary, survived. It was transplanted from country to country, and many of its teachings, as we shall see hereafter, were incorporated with and became part and parcel of the new religion. Indeed the influence which the works and teachings of Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and other philosophers of the Athe-

nian school have exercised on the succeeding generations down even to the present day, can hardly be over-estimated, and though through our increased wealth, and consequently increased means of acquiring knowledge, we may be far in advance of the scientific status of the pre-Christian times, it ought to be remembered that those schools I am at present speaking of, laid the foundation for this increase and accumulation of knowledge.

In speaking first of the Ionic school of philosophy, which claims the precedence on account of seniority, I must say a word in regard to the remarkable antiquity of the Semitic and Aryan birth-places of civilization. When we look at the map of the countries bordering on the south and east of the Mediterranean, we perceive two chains of mountains, the Taurus and Anti-Taurus, which separate the country into two equal parts. That to the south was inhabited by the Semitic race, which eventually extended its dominion along the African sea-coast to the straits of Gibraltar. North of the Taurus, however, the Aryan race first planted the banner of civilization; and it is in Miletus, a city on the banks of the Mæander, that Thales, the father of philosophy, lived and taught. The fact that European civilization, combining both the Semitic and Aryan systems, should have originated in such close proximity, is the more remarkable when we consider how different these systems became in course of time, and what labor, blood and treasure had to be expended before the two were finally amalgamated, formed and developed European civilization. Most sorrowful, too, is it to

record the waste and desolation of these birth-places of science; the ignorance and apathy of the people who live there at the present day, among the old monuments of antiquity; and we must confess that there is much of truth in what Volney says regarding that country in the opening chapters of his "Ruins."

Though Thales is generally spoken of as the father of philosophy, it would be wrong to assume that he was the first philosopher. Indeed, it is more probable that there existed before his time, at Miletus and the other Ionic cities in Asia Minor, schools of instruction in philosophy, and that these schools paved the way for future investigators. At all events, the name of Thales is the first prominent one in the history of philosophy, and it is perhaps his superiority over his predecessors which has caused him to be remembered and the others to be forgotten. Thales was the first one who traced all beginnings to one primary cause. The main doctrine of his philosophical system was, that water or fluid substance was the single original element from which everything came, and to which everything returned. Anaximenes, one of his followers, on the contrary, contended that the air was the source of life; while Heraclitus, of Ephesus, regarded fire as the primary form.

In opposition to this "Elementary" school of philosophy, stands Anaxagoras, of Clazomenæ, who was the first of all the Greek philosophers to discard this elementary theory, and boldly to announce his conviction, that there must be a Supreme Being, who



had not alone created man, animals and plants, but also the elements themselves. Anaxagoras, however, lived one hundred and fifty years after Thales, and his more correct conception of philosophy is owing as much to the advancement of civilization in that time as to his own investigations. He is, in truth, the connecting link between the Ionic and the Athenian schools of philosophy. Like the ideas of Socrates, who was educated by a pupil of Anaxagoras, named Archelaus, the new doctrines enunciated by him met with opposition from the priests, but being protected by Pericles, Anaxagoras escaped persecution and withdrew finally to Lampsachus, where he died at an advanced age.

The school founded at Crotona in Italy by Pythagoras ought to be noticed for its remarkable organization, presenting the anomalous spectacle of a school, avowedly philosophic, taking upon itself the duties of State Government. The school, or rather brotherhood of the Pythagoreans, must have been, however numerous, still exclusive, and, therefore, aristocratic in its character, and excited the jealousy of the people. Their overthrow and downfall as a political association was natural and only a question of time. Regarding the system of Pythagoras, little of a reliable character has come down to us. It seems to have been founded on dualistic principles, where the *Finite* and the *Infinite* were opposed to each other. This Finite was Number One, from which all other things or numbers proceeded. The ceremonies and mysteries which the Pythagoreans made use of in their admission of members, doubt-

less contributed greatly to their preservation as a brotherhood even after their political downfall in the war between Crotona and Sybaris.

## CHAPTER XX.

FROM Anaxagoras we naturally come to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the three greatest names in Hellenic philosophy, who, after the downfall of the political Athens, made that city illustrious as a seat of learning, and who have also left their imprint on civilization for all times to come. It is, perhaps, fortunate for the world, that these great men should have lived and taught at the time when Athens was no longer the mistress of Greece, because, if war and politics had been the chief occupation of the young men of the city, the philosophical schools, in all probability, would not have existed; because there would have been no scholars, for it is certain that no warlike people, no nation engaged in steady warfare, has time for the pursuits of literature. The two periods from the commencement of the French Revolution to the pacification of Europe in 1815, and from that year to the July Revolution in 1830, are fitting illustrations. Whoever contrasts French literature under the Empire, with its condition under the Restoration, will acknowledge the justice of this remark. Rome, also, the greatest nation of ancient historic times, did not produce its authors till the days of Cicero and Cæsar, simply because the Republic ere that time required the services of its citi-

zens in the field. The Romans having to take up arms for the defence and aggrandizement of the nation, had naturally no leisure either to write books or to read them. It was not, in fact, till after Octavius had made himself master of the Empire and had closed the temple of Janus, a sign that there was no war carried on by the State, that literature began to flourish at Rome, and that we hear the Augustan age commemorated as a new era in the progress of letters. Then really began the literary activity of Rome, and we have in rapid succession, such authors as Virgil, Horace, Seneca, Livy, Tacitus, Pliny, Arrian, and other writers who found patrons among the wealthy citizens as well as at the Imperial court. The case of Athenian literature is nearly similar. Though the Peloponnesian war ended with the destruction of the political supremacy of Athens, it at the same time gave more impetus to cultivation of literature. Men who no longer could distinguish themselves as soldiers or politicians, turned their attention to literary avocations. The leisure which the upper classes of the Athenians enjoyed from the possession of wealth, was now used for mental cultivation. Had not Socrates lived at this period of the political decline of his country, we may well doubt whether Plato, Xenophon, Crito or others, would have listened to discourses on the immortality of the soul, or other kindred subjects.

Socrates himself has left no writings behind to show us what he taught, and it is only through Plato, Xenophon, and other men who attended his lectures, that we have any account of his life and of



his teachings. Still, there is so much mixed up in these accounts, and, perhaps, so much more ascribed to the great philosopher than he really taught, that it is impossible to give an accurate statement of the extent of his investigations. For instance, we cannot assert with certainty that Socrates ever announced his belief in the existence of a Supreme Being, of one God in opposition to the polytheistical State Religion. But as he taught the immortality of the soul, we should imagine that he was tending in his system toward monotheism. This is the more probable if we believe that the language ascribed to him by Plato in his *Phædon* was really used by him. In that work Socrates is made to say, that after death the soul is conducted by a species of angel (called a *daimon*) to the judgment-place, where rewards and punishments are given to the released souls according to their deserts. Whether this is Socrates's hypothesis, or Plato's, cannot now be definitely ascertained, for the reason that Plato almost invariably substitutes Socrates as the chief speaker in his dialogues. No doubt much of it belongs to Socrates, but Plato's share, especially in the amplification and explanations of the Socratic system, must have been considerable.

Plato's conception of the Supreme Being was the simplest, and at the same time, the most exalted. God he describes as the fountain of all force, and the creator of all order in the universe,—the sum of whose most exalted attributes and the substantial essence of whose perfections may, as contrasted with our finite and partial aspect of things, be expressed

by the simple τὸ ἀγαθόν—the good. This expression, though not sufficiently expressed by translation, is preferable to τὸ καλόν, the beautiful, the excellent, the perfect. We have no word in the English language which will give exactly the same meaning. The German (but not the English) *Ideal* comes the nearest to it. Both τὸ ἀγαθόν and τὸ καλόν enter largely into the Grecian system of Philosophy, and have also formed the basis of the Æsthetic philosophy, whose outlines Schiller was the first to conceive in modern times, and which, after him, Fichte, Hegel and Schelling amplified. The philosophic system of Plato is generally known as the Dialectic, on account of the conversational style in which it is carried on, as, for instance, the *Phædon* and the *Republic*. It employs definitions, divisions, analyzations, and demonstrations as primary sciences in the investigation of causes, imitating the progression of beings from the first principle of things, and their continual conversion to it as the ultimate object of desire. This method is irreprehensible and most expeditious, for it is connate with things themselves, and employs a multitude of powers for the attainment of truth. It likewise imitates intellect from which it receives its principles and ascends through well-ordered gradations, to being itself. It also prevents the soul from being misled, since it explores, investigates, and demonstrates everything by methods which cannot be confuted, until, by this process, it arrives at the ineffable principle of things. Its energy is confined to the three following divisions:

1. Apposite Arguments.

2. Unfolding Truth.

3. Confuting Falsehood.

Aristotle differs from his master, Plato, in his rejection of the Idealistic theory, and in assigning definite bounds to the powers of demonstration. In his last *Analytic* he lays down the maxim "that there must necessarily be principles of demonstration, and that these principles be undemonstrable." A thing which we cannot demonstrate, that is to say, which we cannot trace back to a prior cause, we can only assume or suppose, and Aristotle, therefore, implies that when science deals with first causes and principles, it means that contemporary with the fact that such and such things exist, we assume, or make suppositions why they exist. Aristotle's method was to collect facts from which he would draw his deductions, while Plato, on the contrary, only used facts whenever they suited his purpose for either supporting or demolishing a theory. While both systems have their advantages, it must be admitted that their thorough application was, in olden times, a matter of impossibility on account of the spirit of the age. In modern times, all schools of philosophy have borrowed largely from these two great masters. It would be carrying the reader too far, were I here to enter on an account of the various Greek schools of philosophy which succeeded those of Plato and of Aristotle, nor do we find many eminent names in this field of science after their time in Hellas. The internal struggles, as well as the wars with Epirus, Macedonia, and Rome, were not favorable to its development, and though schools of philosophy

flourished at Athens, even as late as the reign of Julian, and scholars flocked to them from all parts of the Empire, they produced no thinker worthy to be compared with the three philosophers of whom I have just spoken.



## CHAPTER XXI.

IN speaking of the Roman theogony, I must at first revert to that of the Etruscans, but unfortunately I can do so only in the briefest possible manner, for the simple reason, that with the works of art such as vases, mirrors, etc., which may be found scattered through the museums of Europe, or are yet occasionally met with on Italian soil, nothing reliable has come down to us of this singular nation. Though many of the Romans themselves were of Etruscan origin, and many customs were borrowed from the Etruscans, the conquerors of the world in the earlier period of their national existence were not solicitous to preserve either the history or the literature of the nations they had to contend with in Italy. Enough is known, however, both from Roman accounts and through the works of art I have mentioned, to establish the fact, that the Etruscans must have been a civilized nation, possessing a well-ordered government long ere Romulus founded the Eternal City. The Etruscans must soon have come into close connection with the Romans, for the Tarquinian family we know, came from Etruria. The origin of the Etrurians is also involved in great doubt, but there is reason to suppose that the Pelasgian came first into Italy, that the Phœnicians probably afterwards

founded some colonies there, and lastly, that the Celtic inhabitants of Gaul came after them. There is, indeed, no evidence extant whereby we could fix the period of the migration of the Celts to the West, but we know that 900 years before Christ the Gauls under Brennus desolated Macedonia and Thessaly. It is, therefore, probable that France and Upper Italy became the home of the Celts at an early period afterwards, and that some colonies were sent by them to Central Italy, when they combined with the Pelasgians and Phœnicians and formed the Etruscan kingdom. Indeed, judging from some of the figures on the Etruscan polished mirrors, there seems to me but little doubt of the correctness of the hypothesis of their mixed origin. For while their alphabet, as seen by their inscriptions, is Semitic, the portraits on the mirrors are of the Aryan Celtic cast. The destruction of Troy by the Greeks may or may not have brought more people to Etruria. The story of Æneas is too mythical to place any reliance upon. At all events it may be taken for granted, that when Rome was founded, the Etruscans were the most flourishing and the most civilized people inhabiting Central Italy, and that Romulus and his successors undoubtedly adopted more or less of their institutions.

The Etruscans themselves probably borrowed their theogony from the different nations to whom they owed their origin. Their gods,—for they were polytheists—appear to have been divided into two classes, namely, first: hidden gods of which there is no number, and secondly: inferior gods, twelve in

number; corresponding with those of Hellas, at whose head stood Tinia (Jupiter). This, perhaps, shows better than anything else, that, as in other countries, the Etruscans had at first a monotheistic system, in course of time they multiplied their gods, adding hero-worship eventually, as their civilization progressed. The twelve lower gods were, no doubt, borrowed either from Greece itself, or more probably, from some of the Greek colonies in the southern part of the Italian peninsula. It is also more than probable, that in turn the Sabines, Umbrians, and other nationalities of Central Italy, borrowed largely from the Etruscan system long before the foundation of the Roman commonwealth. But as they subsequently all became part and parcel of the great State as well as the Etruscans themselves, their earlier history being of less importance, was lost in common with that of the Etruscans. Solely by the remnants of their works have the Etruscans preserved their place in the annals of history, and what little has come down to us, we owe to the archæological zeal of a few men.

The Romans themselves have interwoven so many legends and mythological tales into the history of their early days, that posterity has found it a hard task to separate the wheat from the chaff. There is so much of falsehood mixed up with the truth, that it has become almost a matter of impossibility to give a true version of the history of the greatest empire of ancient times. In order to judge correctly of the reasons which led to the foundation of Rome, and why the site on the Tiber was selected by its

founders, we have to discard all the old fables, and take into account solely the advantages of its geographical position. When we look at the map of Italy, we can very well perceive the reasons why the banks of the greatest river of the central part of the Peninsula should have been selected for the capital of the new State. Situated on the first high ground, not too far from the sea-coast, it had in its location great advantages. Besides, it must be taken into consideration that twenty-five hundred years ago, Rome must have been a great deal nearer to the Mediterranean than she is at present, for even in our times, the Tiber is adding yearly by deposits of alluvium to the extent of its delta. Romulus, the reputed founder of the city, no doubt expected that Rome would in course of time become a great sea-port; just as the founders of Washington imagined it would, when they selected the present site of the Federal city for the metropolis of the American Republic. But Rome notwithstanding all its greatness never became a great sea-port, and for centuries its victories were won on land instead of at sea.

In framing the institutions of the new commonwealth, Romulus and his successors borrowed largely, as I had occasion to remark above, from their neighbors, the Etruscans. Though they rejected the hidden gods, as a barbarous people naturally would, they adopted, as the chief deities, the twelve inferior ones worshipped in Etruria. But as war was the chief occupation of the citizens, they gave the first place to Mars, who was even held in higher repute



among the Romans than was Apollo among the Greeks. The military service, indeed, was compulsory on all burgesses, or citizens, whether of patrician or plebeian descent, and the maxim, *patriæ potestas*, shows the power the State exercised over the individual citizen, both in the field and at home. The theogony of the new State being based on the Etruscan system, was largely polytheistic, but at the same time, the commonwealth was too jealous of priestly power to constitute its members into a separate caste. The priests were chosen from among the people. In the early days the Patricians monopolized all the offices, but later the priesthood, as well as the civil service, was open to all citizens. The connection between Church and State was very close. The augurs accompanied the armies in the field, and no general could undertake an important movement unless the augurs had divined success. The highest priestly office, that of Pontifex Maximus, was one eagerly sought for by the politicians during the Republic, and the Emperors at first reserved the post to themselves. The name is yet preserved and borne by the bishops of Rome, who adopted it at the fall of the Western Empire, and are now known and spoken of as Supreme Pontiffs.

A nation as barbarous as the old Romans must have been, whose austerity and simplicity of manners were the wonder and admiration of men, even at as late a period as the times of Pyrrhus, could not fail to be devout as well as superstitious. Their religion being in early days simpler, less pantheistic and easier understood, than it became when after-

wards they extended their conquests abroad, and with each new acquisition augmented the number of their gods, pervaded all classes of the commonwealth, and produced thereby a singular and very lasting bond of unity. When, however, the Romans became masters of Carthage, of Greece, of Spain, and of Asia ; when riches and talents were thrown broadcast into the metropolis, then, though its temples increased in numbers and were decked out in greater splendor, this ancient simplicity of worship attended by heartfelt devotion, was replaced by a multitude of imposing ceremonies which feasted the eye but left little impression on the soul.

## CHAPTER XXII.

It is at this period, commencing about the time of the close of the second Punic war, that the great change in the religious condition of the Romans commenced. Wealth, as we have seen elsewhere, also here materially altered the condition of the people, and in Rome especially, it tended to create an upper class, even more opulent and able to enjoy leisure, than can be found in any other nation of antiquity. The gardens of Lucullus, the baths of Caracalla, and the villas of Latium, all are witnesses of the possession of great wealth by the upper classes of Rome, during the latter days of the Republic and under the Empire. It is from this period that we find the Hellenic philosophy exercising an important influence in undermining the Roman theogony. The young Romans who attended the schools of Athens and of Corinth, who read Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, were led to doubt and to reason. They naturally began to compare the dogmas of the State religion with the teachings of philosophy, and when they returned from the schools of Greece to their homes, they brought with them more correct conceptions of the truth, than they could have learned at Rome. The gilded temples and the rich sanctuaries of the gods failed to offer the same attrac-

tions which the more rude structures of the Republic were wont to present, and it was partly by the protection of the State, and partly for the want of a better religious system, that the old Roman theogony survived so long a time as it did.

But it was not in philosophy that the genius of the Roman people distinguished itself. Its schools were merely offshoots of those of Hellas. There is no important metaphysical work left to us by the Romans. Indeed, with the exception of a few treatises by Cicero and others, such as, for instance, *De Senectute* and *De Amicitia*, there is no evidence extant that, until Seneca's day, philosophy was aught but an adaptation of the Grecian system. Seneca and the elder and the younger Pliny, were philosophical writers of eminence, but unfortunately most of their writings have perished, and of that which has come down to us and supposed to be their productions, it is by no means certain that they were the sole authors. Apparently it is strange that so great a nation as the Romans should have in so large a measure neglected the study of philosophy; that during their long national existence there should not have arisen among this people a philosopher, the peer of Socrates, of Plato, and of Aristotle. The only reason for this intellectual poverty which I can assign, is the destruction of liberty. The three great philosophers of Greece all flourished in a small State, in a republic which had no king, no court to dispense patronage. Thales and Pythagoras lived in a republic; Descartes and Bayle could not have propagated their doctrines under the shadow of the Bastille. Rousseau



and Voltaire wrote in opposition to the court. In fine, philosophy is a universal science which does not flourish under an exclusive system, such as a monarchy always must be.

Now the Romans from the time they began to amass wealth and to enjoy leisure, had always a master. Marius, Sylla, Pompey, Cæsar, Antony and others, were all supreme in their day, even though they were not called emperors, as Augustus was named eventually. The men of learning, like all others wanting favors, flocked to their courts, and, in order to bask in the sunshine of the masters, sang their praises instead of cultivating science. Then, also, it ought to be remembered, that the wonderful history of the republic furnished an inexhaustive and more agreeable subject to literary men, and this fact alone accounts in a great measure for the large number of historical works which appeared toward the close of the Republic, and under the Empire. Of these works we do not now possess even the one-tenth part, and yet enough remains to show the extraordinary activity of the Roman writers in this field of literature. We have in our own day an illustration of this attractiveness of history, in the number of books which have been written on the subject of the late rebellion in the Southern States, while the volumes written on the French Revolution after the restoration of the Bourbons, would constitute a great library by themselves.

Though the Romans did not distinguish themselves in philosophical investigations, they contributed in a large measure to the preservation of the

Grecian philosophy. Greek philosophers and teachers were sure to find patronage among the upper classes of Rome, and the works of the leading philosophical writers were transcribed in great numbers by the slaves and freedmen who abounded in the establishment of every Roman citizen of note. But after all, it was only the upper classes who enjoyed leisure and educational facilities. While the wealthy and powerful minority improved and advanced in civilization, the masses of the people, especially during the Empire, were left in hopeless ignorance, with no means of improving their condition. The superstition engendered by the amplification of the polytheistical system was looked upon by the government as necessary for its existence, and even the wisest of the emperors, as Trajan and the Antonines, persecuted their Christian subjects for reasons of state policy, rather than on account of any hostility they may have felt toward the new religion. The means of education among the lower classes of the Romans, seem to have been very limited, and the state seems to have been more solicitous to satisfy the masses with spectacles and feasts, than to promote intelligence and industry. That this course of policy accelerated the downfall of the Empire, is well known, and need not be here dwelt upon.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE consideration of the religious system of the Teutonic race, though a highly interesting subject, is unfortunately obscured by the same veil of doubt and uncertainty, and encumbered by the same mass of legends and myths, as those other systems I have already described. The task of giving, therefore, even only a cursory review of it is one of extreme difficulty. A great deal has been written on the subject; especially by German writers, who, with commendable patience, have investigated and shed what light we have on the origin of the greatest race of Europe; but there is a long period of time which will never be reached by investigation, namely, the time from their supposed migration from Asia to the western part of Europe. A wandering, nomadic race, with no fixed habitation, has no use for records or histories, and it is only by tradition or hypothesis that we can learn, or even assume, whence they came, or to what country they owe their origin.

The Teutonic race, which at this day has overrun the greater portions of Europe, North America and Australia, which has founded the greatest empires of modern times, is of the pure Aryan stock. It is generally claimed that they came from the Caucasian mountains, a continuation of the Taurus, which, as I

have shown above, divided the Aryan and Semitic races. Schlegel, Griscom and other writers claim that the Teutonic and Persian races formed originally one nation, and the analogy in the two languages, even at this day, is sufficiently striking to substantiate in a great degree the truth of this hypothesis. It is, at all events, certain that this great race originated in the western part of Central Asia, but no fixed locality can be assigned for its origin. As the similarity between the Teutonic and Persian languages is also in a great measure observable in the Sanscrit, it is not unlikely that the Aryan races originated in the north of India, and that in their migration westward they took very nearly the same route which Alexander took in his campaign against the Indies. If that be true, we may reasonably assume, that after leaving the Punjab, the Persians remained and founded their kingdom on the banks of the Euphrates, while their Teutonic brethren pressed on to the north-west, skirting the southern shore of the Caspian Sea, and entered Europe through the Caucasian gates. It is improbable that the Teutonic race ever came as far west in Asia as the Hellespont, for the reason, that had such been the case, they would in all probability have remained in a country which, even in the earliest historic times, was fertile and rich beyond description.

It is a matter of great regret that neither the German nor the Persian popular traditions have preserved aught of this interesting portion of their history, and what we know of their former condition rests upon similarities in language, in manners and in



customs. These, indeed, are of the most marked character. The late Frederick Schlegel, in one of his lectures on Modern History, says, for instance, that—

“The relationship between the Persian and German languages has been already often noticed by the learned, and a similar coincidence is also manifested in their respective constitutions. We perceive among the Persians the institution of the *arrière ban*, or levy in mass, of all freemen for military service, and a kind of feudalism, as well as a very clearly marked spirit of chivalry. Hence, agreement between the two nations in many parts of their worship ought not to surprise us.”

Julius Cæsar is the first writer of importance who gives us an account of the Germanic or Teutonic race. Fully eight hundred, or even one thousand years must have elapsed from their departure from Asia, when Cæsar first came into collision with them. They still had semi-nomadic customs, and were not scrupulous as to appropriating their neighbors' lands, for we find that the first campaign which Cæsar made was against the Helvetians, who, persuaded by Orgetorix, had quitted their mountain homes and broken into Gaul. Throughout Cæsar's Commentaries a great deal of information is found, dispersed among other subjects, regarding German manners and customs, but the great general never seems to have had either time or inclination to study the history and condition of this warlike but barbarous nation. His limited sojourn in Germany, and the scanty means he had of judging a great people, did

not enable him to furnish his readers with a correct and reliable account of the German race. There is no doubt that Julius Cæsar prevented the subjugation of Gaul at that period by the Germans, since we find that besides the Helvetians, the Marcomanians under Ariovistus, the Belgæ, the Suevi and other tribes were ready to cross the Rhine and occupy the country. Cæsar's nine years' residence in Gaul delayed the occupation of France by the Germans for three hundred years.

Tacitus is the first and almost the only one of the Roman historians who has furnished posterity with a correct and connected narrative of the Teutonic nation. Even he had, however, only limited and scanty means of information, and could not have been able to attain a correct account of the extent of the then Teutonic Empire and the divisions of its people. Tacitus, therefore, only gives us an account of those German tribes which lived the nearest to the Roman frontier. There appear to me to have been two great divisions among the Germans, those of the South and those of the North. The former were called Swabians (*Schwaben*) and the latter Saxons. These again were divided into numerous sub-divisions, created by political and local necessities. Now we find the Swabians in Southern and Central Germany, even in the days of Julius Cæsar, while as late a writer as Tacitus does not even mention the Saxons, and therefore the supposition holds good, that even in the time of Tacitus they had not yet come south from Jutland, Mecklenburg, Pomerania and what is now East and West Prussia. These two

German nations appear also to have had separate theogonies. The chief deity of those Germans with whom Tacitus became acquainted, was called *Tuisto*, whom Leibnitz supposes to be *Teut*, from which, no doubt, the word *Deutsch* originated, and which afterwards became the national designation for the collective tribes. The second god described by Tacitus, *Mannus*, is clearly the old word *man*, or *mon*, which denoted an inferior or vassal, thus showing that *Teut* was regarded as the Supreme Being, while afterwards *Man*, or *Mon*, was associated with him, though in an inferior position.

On the other hand the Saxons, or the northern portion of the Teutonic nation, venerated as their chief deity a god whom they called *Odin* or *Woden*. On the same principle that the old word *Wehrman* was afterwards changed into *German*, we may reasonably suppose that this *Woden* was changed into *Goden*, which in its turn was, in course of time, abbreviated into *God*. The female character of *Fraya*, which appears so conspicuously in the North German and Scandinavian mythology, is not mentioned by Tacitus, and probably the Southern Germans had no female deities. The two races of Swabians and Saxons do not seem to have become united until Charlemagne had conquered the great Saxon Duke Wittekind. Of the old mythology of Germany, and of the Teutonic race generally, we have tolerably correct accounts through the *Nibelungen Lieder* and other songs which Tacitus speaks of as being *the only records or annals of the country*. That the polytheism which gradually enlarged itself in the sys-

tems, both of the South and of the North, and was augmented by Kobolds, elves, sprites (*geister*) and dwarfs, never took deep root among the Germanic tribes, must be solely ascribed to the want of a regularly organized priesthood, whose interest it would have been to preserve and impress the system upon the people, and this seeming neglectfulness of spiritual worship did not fail to be observed by those who came in contact with the Germans. Cæsar, in his Commentaries, remarks upon the fact that the Germans, unlike the Gauls, had no Druids, and it is a characteristic trait of the German national character, even at this day, that the clergy are not held in high repute among the majority of the people. More invectives have been launched against *das Pfaffenthum* in Germany than in any other country, and the word *Pfaffe* itself, so untranslatable, is as expressive, as a contemptuous designation of ecclesiastics, as the term knave is in English for a well-trained rogue. That such a people should have originated the Reformation, that it should yet seek for a higher standard of excellence, and therefore be foremost in the philosophical field, need excite no wonder. But of this we shall speak hereafter.

At the time they first appear prominently in history, they were as yet rude and uncultivated. They had no literature, simply because they had no wealth, and their polytheistic system had no abiding-place in temples or pagodas, because architecture was with them an unknown science. The primitive groves served as places of worship, and the civil and military leaders mostly fulfilled the priestly functions.



As long as the Germans dwelt in their rude country, there was no danger of their changing their simpler though ruder creed. When they finally appeared as conquerors and masters before the walls of Rome, the old paganism of Italy had been swept away by Christianity. The adoption of the new religion by the conquerors of the old Empire followed as a matter of necessity ; being urged upon the leaders sometimes as a matter of state policy, and also, we hope, through a perception of the truth. The temporary decline of literature which followed and continued through the Middle Ages, even after the conversion of the ruling Teutonic race, was owing to the great and continuous wars, and to the growing power of the ecclesiastical order. This brings us to the consideration of the two monotheistic systems of Judaism and Christianity, a careful study of which is essential to the perception of the present state of philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

CONCERNING the Hebrew theogony we have abundant materials on hand for research and inquiry, the principal ones being the Bible, the Talmud, and other Scriptural commentaries, and the minor ones, the inscriptions, coins, and the other archæological remains which have been preserved to us. The ground has been thoroughly reviewed for the last fifteen or sixteen hundred years, and the discussions and divergencies have been without limit. Almost at the threshold we find, even at this day, two schools in opposition to each other. First, the one which implicitly follows the Biblical accounts, which believes everything recorded therein as literally true, and which brands all who differ from them in this belief, all doubters, all skeptics as unorthodox, heretical, etc. The second class believes more or less in the Biblical accounts, in proportion to the profoundness of investigation to which its members have arrived. This class embraces not only the different philosophical schools, but also the dissentient Jewish and Christian sects. It would carry me too far, were I to enter upon a discussion or even a relation of Biblical criticism, and therefore I prefer to give only in brief, the historical facts as they appear to be substantiated by evidence and reason.

I have already stated that when the Patriarch Abraham visited the land of Mizraim, or Egypt, he found that country already in a high state of civilization, possessed of an organized government, with a king at its head, well-established institutions, civil, military, and religious, its agriculture being especially in a flourishing condition. His grandson, Jacob, who, according to the Bible, went to Egypt two hundred years later, (though the interval was probably less than half that number of years,) found his son Joseph there as Prime Minister. Fourteen hundred years, according to Bunsen, one of the greatest of Biblical scholars, the Jews or Hebrews continued to dwell in Egypt, and at the time of the exodus, according to the Scriptural account, they had increased to 600,000 male adults, equal to three million of souls. Their social condition in Egypt must, during the latter period of their residence in that country, have been extremely irksome. Most probably they were, like the *fellahs* of the present day, compelled to work on the public buildings, the canals, and even to cultivate the crown lands. The yoke which rested upon them, and the persecutions which they no doubt suffered, led to the desire for emigration *en masse*, and it perhaps required but little persuasion on the part of Moses, their self-chosen leader, to induce them to carry this plan into execution. And here I must revert to a remarkable trait in the national character, which we see in operation even at this day, namely, their isolation in the midst of the world, their living in and constituting separate communities, even while dispersed over the earth among other

nations. Even in the earliest days of their existence, they did not readily mingle with any other people, but chose to preserve, throughout their history, the individuality of their race. A great deal of this singular conduct must be explained by inquiring into the character of the founders of the nation. There is no doubt that the three patriarchs were men possessed not alone of great virtue, but also of great sagacity and wisdom. We can readily imagine that men of superior understanding like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, became disgusted while living in Canaan and Mizraim, with the idolatry and polytheism with which they were surrounded. Still, the possession of wealth—for they had herds in abundance—made them naturally prudent and thoughtful. They do not seem to have been willing to encounter the opposition which it is the fate of all reformers to encounter, nor did they possess the power needed, had they wished to effect a reformation by force. Being few in number, and naturally not wishing to endanger their wealth, they remained quiet. But at the same time they urged upon their descendants and followers the necessity of a close union among themselves, if they wished, in the first place, to preserve their wealth, which must have been considerable, and in the second place, if they did not wish to become degraded and polluted by the polytheism of the pagan nations among whom they lived. Though no mention is made in the Bible of any leader in Israel, from the time of Joseph's death till the assumption of power by Moses, it must be assumed that the Hebrews had, while living among the



Egyptians, a government of their own; but of the character of this government, whether it was in the Patriarchal form or otherwise, we have no means of knowing. Still it must be presumed that there existed a central authority, a rallying point of the young nation, for without such an institution it would have been impossible for the descendants of Abraham to preserve their nationality intact for so many centuries. The presence of so large a body of men preserving a distinct national organization and having customs and manners different from the rest of the people, must necessarily have been a source not only of annoyance, but even of great anxiety, to such despotic rulers as the Egyptian Pharaohs were. These monarchs must have stood in continual dread of the growing power of the "Hebrew" strangers, and the fear of an eventual overthrow of their dynasty must have been well founded. What the Ethiopians had done in former times, it was not unnatural to suppose the Hebrews might do, if not subjugated. The priesthood, also, which was all-powerful, may have looked with suspicion on men who did not conform to the established religion of the country, and they no doubt urged upon the king and his advisers the necessity of energetic measures to check the power of the strangers, and when these measures of persecution failed, to consent to their removal from the country. Regarding the expulsion or exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt, we have only the Scriptural record to guide us, and how much of truth there is mixed in the narrative with legend and fable, it is impossible to de-

termine at this day. On the supposition, however, that their existence as a separate nation in Egypt was looked upon as dangerous to the safety of the state, I am led to the conclusion that the Egyptian authorities readily consented to their emigration, and that Pharaoh's pursuit of them and the subsequent destruction of his army in the Red Sea, or near its shores, is as mythical as the accounts of the Roman historians of the early history of the great commonwealth are now known to be.

The great mind which managed and superintended this hazardous task of leading a whole nation from its ancient homes in search of new ones, was that of Moses, who according to all the accounts which have come down to us, must have been as wise a ruler and statesman as has ever wielded power in historic times. His task must have been one of extreme difficulty and hardship, for the Hebrews—numerous and powerful as they were at the time of their leaving Egypt—had barely yet emerged from barbarism. From the nature of the chief occupation of the nation in tending their flocks, which constituted their greatest source of wealth, we must presume that while in Egypt the majority led a semi-nomadic life, and that they did not devote their time to agriculture. Such a people naturally can have but a limited acquaintance with letters, and could have kept no written records of their previous history. Still, the origin of the nation and of its heroes, was preserved through the traditions of the people, but these traditions were, like others, mixed up with fables and legends, which were readily believed and even

afterwards augmented, by a superstitious people. Whether Moses was an enthusiast and believed himself to have received a mission from God, or whether he invented the story to strengthen his authority, we cannot now determine. But that he was eminently fitted for the post he assumed, cannot be denied.

All accounts are agreed that Moses himself was brought up at the royal court of the Egyptian king, under the protection of Pharaoh's daughter, and that he received his education at the hands of the Egyptian priests. The minute account given in the Bible of his killing an Egyptian overseer for maltreating a Hebrew, and his subsequent flight to avoid the visitations of the law, show us not alone the forced labor system prevalent in Egypt, but also the existence of regular courts of justice. Taking refuge with Jethro, a Midianite chief, he escaped persecution, and, as he married Jethro's daughter, he perhaps would have lived and died there, if, as is not improbable, he had not been recalled by his countrymen into Egypt. They most naturally looked for a leader when Pharaoh's yoke became at last too hard to be borne. At all events, Moses's stay in Midian was of long duration, and he, during that time, acquired an accurate topographical knowledge of the Arabian Desert and of the surrounding country. It is expressly recorded, that while tending the flocks of his father-in-law, he went as far as Mount Horeb, or Sinai, and this region seems to have been a favorite resort of the great Hebrew legislator ever afterwards. It is here where we find him making his first grand halt,

where, when sufficiently distant from Egypt, he could exercise his authority without fear, and where, consequently, he makes the formal and solemn announcement of his mission to his countrymen. Whether Moses had selected Palestine originally as the future home of his people, is doubtful, from the fact that he could by a shorter route have reached that country. He perhaps may have wished to go further south into Arabia, a comparatively unknown, but highly extolled land, and may have been prevented by the rebellious spirit of the Hebrews from executing this purpose. Certainly no general would allow the enthusiasm of his soldiers to cool by marches of great hardship, and the Hebrews, when they left Egypt, were sufficiently numerous to overpower the inhabitants of Palestine.

The residence in the Desert is said by the Bible to have lasted forty years, yet the record of the events of two years only is given. It must have occupied far less time, and the best authorities now limit the wanderings to no more than ten years, and even a less number. But Moses himself did not witness the triumph of his people. The great labor he had undertaken must have hastened his death, compelling him to leave to others the completion of the great work he had begun.



## CHAPTER XXV.

THE influence which Moses exercised over the Hebrews was undoubtedly great. The high position he occupied at the Egyptian court in his youth, may have laid the foundation for it, but his talents and his high moral character contributed mostly to his maintaining this ascendancy till his death. Indeed, there are few, if any historic portraits, which shine with greater lustre and over which I love to linger longer in admiration, than on that of Moses. Uniting with unusual accomplishments, a rare philanthropy, we see him cast aside a life of ease, luxury, and power, for the thankless office of leadership of his oppressed countrymen. The task was as hazardous as it was ill-requited. How often is it recorded, for instance, that the children of Israel murmured, that they were rebellious! By firmness which, however, was not always accompanied by gentle means, the great leader overcame all opposition to his authority. But severity occasionally became necessary for self-preservation, as well as for the preservation of the nation, and if we compare the subsequent career of Mohammed in dealing with a people as barbarous as the Hebrews, the immeasurable superiority of Moses becomes apparent to every candid mind. The code of laws which he has left behind him is

one of the greatest monuments of human wisdom. These laws are the glory of intellect, and it is no wonder that even at this day there should be millions of men who believe that they emanated directly from the Supreme Being.

It is no easy task to determine how much of the law was transmitted by the Patriarchs, how much Moses gave himself, and what parts were added by the prophets and priests after his time. It is safe to assert, however, that we owe to him the ten commandments. Few and simple as they are, they form the groundwork, the foundation, of the Hebrew, the Christian, and the Mohammedan religions. They are, in short, the basis of monotheism. What is more simple, and yet more explicit, than the following?

“Thou shalt have no other god before me.”

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.”

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them nor serve them.”

I would ask the reader if this is not monotheism pure and simple, and though Moses makes the Supreme Being speak here himself, it must be borne in mind that it was probably done in order to impress his countrymen with the importance of the commandments. The great leader's authority would have been seriously weakened had he simply told the children of Israel that it was himself who made these laws, for the Hebrews were not at all times ready to acknowledge his authority. This was the

reason probably why Moses in giving his laws to the Hebrews places himself in the attitude of an intermediary between the Supreme Being and the nation ; that he invariably begins his laws with the explanation, "The Lord spake unto Moses."

Nor was his position as leader the only source of trouble to Moses. According to the accounts in the Bible, his relations with his own family were not at all times harmonious. While he advanced the fortunes of his brother Aaron and of his sister Miriam, to the exclusion of his own children, both the brother and sister seem to have been envious of the great legislator, and it is recorded in the twelfth chapter of the book of Numbers that Miriam and Aaron "spoke against Moses." Aaron, also, does not appear in the best light while acting as leader during the absence of Moses on Horeb. Though being elevated by his brother to the high-priesthood of a pure religion, he himself appears as the destroyer of the faith, by making the golden calf and performing a grossly idolatrous worship, in which he compelled the people to "go naked unto *their* shame." He appears to have been a weak, vain man, and the account, as related in the Bible, of his deposition before his death, leads me to the belief that Moses was compelled by the high-priest's misconduct to confer the dignity on the son Eleazar. In no other way can the passage in Numbers, chapter xx., be satisfactorily explained, that "Moses stripped Aaron of his garments (his priestly robes) and put them on Eleazar, Aaron's son."

A much more pleasing picture is that of Jethro,

the father-in-law of Moses. The Midianite chieftain seems to have been a steadfast friend and a wise counsellor. It is due to his suggestion, that Moses instituted law-courts among his people. The death of Moses himself is briefly recorded in the latter end of the Pentateuch. Like the cases of Alaric and of Attila, his place of sepulchre was kept a secret from all. He died full of years and honors, but the fulfillment of his plans was not vouchsafed to him to witness. Standing on the hills of Moab, he could see the valley of the Jordan decked out in all its glory, ere his soul fled to his Maker, but it was left to Joshua, his successor, chosen by himself, to lead the descendants of Abraham into what they called their promised land.

Wise and just as the majority of the laws of Moses undoubtedly were, his system was faulty principally in his regulation of the priesthood. The *caste* which he wished to introduce among the nation, according to the Egyptian model, was distasteful to a people who, in order to be free, had left their homes, and who were not willing to see a new set of masters set over them. Moreover, the enormous tax which Moses laid upon the people, the one-tenth of all the produce, for the support of this priesthood, must have met with great opposition, on account of its oppressive nature. Furthermore, neither Aaron nor his descendants were men of great ability. The high-priests became in a short time, notwithstanding their high position, the weakest men in the land, and the model theocracy which Moses had contemplated, was never realized. Moses himself must have be-



come aware of this ere his death, else he would never have chosen Joshua, a man who did not belong to the priestly tribe, to become his successor, instead of one of his own sons, or the son of his brother Aaron, the high-priest Eleazar. The priests themselves do not appear to have been much impressed with the importance of their holy calling, and instances of bad priests are by no means rare in the Bible. Thus we see the sons of Eli, the high-priest mentioned in Samuel, as "the sons of Belial, who knew not the Lord." Still later, in the days of king Hezekiah, the priesthood must have been in a lamentable state, for it is mentioned both in "Chronicles" and in "Kings," that many of the priests were not *sanctified*. The people were not slow to profit by this bad conduct of their priests and to make it an excuse for not paying their tithes, and the kings frequently had to issue edicts and mandates, to compel the people to support the clergy.

This habitual neglect of the ecclesiastical order by the Hebrews was owing mainly to the migratory habits of the people at the time, and after the institution of the laws. While the Egyptians, Phœnicians and Hindoos had fixed habitations, and the tax-gatherers could easily find each man, the Hebrews having no country at first, and leading a nomadic life, could more easily evade the payment of the taxes imposed by their national code. Their wealth being in herds, could not be so clearly ascertained as that of a people whose principal occupation was the cultivation of the soil. In later years, likewise, many of the kings must have looked with jealous

eyes on the enormous revenues of the church, and therefore were not always anxious to compel their collection. It was only, perhaps, when they needed the services of the church, that they exerted their authority for its benefit. All these causes naturally tended to weaken the influence of the priests and Levites, and led to the institution of a more beneficial ecclesiastic order, that of the Rabbis, whose numbers being confined to no particular family or tribe, were more identified with the people, and exerted a correspondingly greater influence.

The neglect of the priesthood by the people, however, had its evil as well as beneficial results. After the Hebrews had made themselves masters of Palestine, and parceled its territories out among the tribes, a great portion of the nation—especially in those sections where the old inhabitants had been suffered to remain, and in those which were contiguous to other countries—began to drift slowly, and at first imperceptibly, into paganism, till at last, after Solomon's time, idolatry boldly contended for supremacy with monotheism. The proximity of the polytheistic Phœnicians, especially, must have exerted a great influence over the Hebrews. Naturally the rude inhabitants of the interior must have looked with astonishment and admiration upon the beautiful temples which adorned Sidon and Tyre, and of which as old an author as Herodotus speaks with enthusiastic fervor. The remembrance of Egypt and the connection which the Hebrews still kept up with that country, must also have been of considerable influence upon the religious as well as upon the social and political

life of the people. Finally there was, except in the days of David and Solomon, a want of a strong central authority. We look in vain, except under the reign of those two monarchs, for anything like national unity, and the subsequent disruption of the kingdom and the establishment of Judah in the south, and of Israel in the north, divided the clergy as well as the rest of the nation. The northern portion plunged headlong into polytheism, while the south, having Jerusalem and its temple as a rallying point, clung to the monotheistic system and the Mosaic law.

The schools of the *prophets*, the predecessors of the Rabbis, are mentioned as early as the days of Saul, and it is out of those schools most probably that Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah and other prophets came. The literature of the people was of a purely ecclesiastical character, as, for instance, we see to-day in the schools of the East that the Koran is almost the sole study. We find no traces of secular literature, or at least no remains of any have come down to us, and so little was this kind of study thought of, that the Mishna mentions, as one of the good deeds of king Hezekiah, that he hid (suppressed?) a book of *medicaments*. The Semitic race generally has shown but little attention to secular education, and what literary activity they have exerted has been expended mostly upon religious subjects. It is for this reason, perhaps, that nothing, save the laws and Scriptural accounts have come down to us, and the prophets, who were the teachers of the people, in their anxiety to preserve the laws of Moses, looked with



distrust upon the cultivation of secular literature, and especially of philosophy. It was not till the dispersion of the Jews and the final destruction of their capital, that they began the cultivation of letters and sent forth that great array of writers which has sprung from that people, without intermission, from the time of Philo and Josephus to the present day.

Of the later theological productions of the Hebrews; of the Talmud, the Mishna and other works, it would require a volume by itself to do justice. Their influence on the national character of the Hebrews was even greater than the law of Moses itself. These remarkable books, while enlarging and commenting upon the original laws, eventually took their place. To their influence is due the perpetuation of the isolated condition which has characterized the Hebrews in their dispersion all over the world. The persecution which they experienced wheresoever they went, tended more to the preservation of the old creed than the independence and the homes which had been theirs in Palestine. The old law, so long neglected, now formed a bond of union so strong that it withstood all the assaults and persecutions of succeeding ages. In fact the Hebrews only began to experience and appreciate the superiority of monotheism, when they were driven out of their country and forced to live among the polytheistic nations.

The writers of the Talmud are also greatly superior to their predecessors, the prophets, thus showing the advance of civilization. The names of Gamaliel, of Hillol, of Jehudah-ha-Nasi, and of Philo, claim



a place in the history of philosophy, and their sayings in works like the *Pirke Aboth*, the *Mishna*, and *Gemara*, show a greatly extended range of thought. I will only quote the following from the *Pirke Aboth*, which is at once a philosophical maxim and an ecclesiastical dogma :

“ Which is the right way that a man should walk in? That which glorifies the Creator and gains for him the esteem of men.”

The dispersion of the Hebrews essentially changed their mode of worship in a beneficial degree. The old sacrifices were abolished, and in their place prayers and deeds of benevolence or charity were substituted. Christianity, in its primitive age, still more simplified this worship, and the Reformation subsequently arose from a desire to abolish the many cumbrous ceremonies with which the priests had burdened the mode of worship. We find the same ceremonial incubus in Hebrew worship of later days, and it is only as civilization progressed, as toleration and liberty of conscience were extended to all men that the Hebrews emancipated themselves from the greater part of this dumb show of ceremony, that philosophy progressed and prospered among them, and that the monotheistic system of Moses was made to conform to the spirit of the age. The singular tie of nationality which has preserved them as communities, even while dispersed all over the world, is, at the same time, growing gradually weaker. There may be, perhaps, no longer any desire for a return to Zion, nor is it any longer possible that such a scheme could be realized. At all events, the Hebrews may

be said to be happier in their adopted homes, where freedom of conscience and equality before the law prevail, than their ancestors ever could have been in the so-called Holy Land.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

IT remains for me to speak of the Christian religion ere I close the second part of this book, and I can only do so in the briefest possible manner, leaving necessarily a great deal unsaid, and allowing myself only to touch upon the main facts of its history and its connection with philosophy. The question "What is Christianity?" at first suggests itself to the mind, and it is a question more easily asked than answered. For, as we shall see hereafter, Christianity is essentially different at this day from what it was at the time of its foundation, or from what it was ten or even five centuries ago. There is no other religion which has so easily accommodated itself to the spirit of the times, and has endeavored to keep step with the progress of the age. Again, though it is the faith of the majority of the civilized nations of the earth, there can be found no creed which has so many different subdivisions or sects, each of which, naturally enough claims for itself the merit of having the purest and most perfect type of Christianity in its dogma, and in most cases looks upon the adherents of other sects as heretics and unbelievers. But of this I shall have occasion to speak hereafter. At present I must touch briefly upon the origin and the history of this faith.

Nearly nineteen hundred years ago there reigned in Palestine, or as it was then called, Judæa, Herod the Great, descended from an Idumæan family, which by superior talents and by cultivating the friendship of the Roman people, had supplanted the Asmonean dynasty, the last native rulers of the Hebrews. The power and independence which the Hebrews had acquired under the earlier Asmoneans, had been weakened and finally lost, through the dissensions among the members of the Asmonean family, which were taken advantage of by the Romans. The Hebrews, also, paid less attention to their political affairs than to the contentions between two theological factions which have become celebrated in history—those of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. As in other cases similar to it, the strife between the two religious schools increased from day to day in bitterness; it entered into the social and political life of the people and divided the nation eventually into two hostile camps. The struggle survived the ruin of the nation, which it brought about, and has never been thoroughly given up. It was only mutual exhaustion and separation from each other, that brought about something like a truce between the contending factions. At the time of Herod, while the quarrel was at its highest point, there were enough moderate men who would not take sides with either of the parties, but who were ready to adopt a creed which disclaimed all connection with either Pharisees or Sadduces.

Another important point which materially aided the introduction of the new faith in Palestine, was



the universal belief of the coming of a Messiah, who should once more lead Israel out of bondage; and St. John the Baptist, as well as others who were regarded then as prophets, were never weary of talking about the coming of the Messiah. The Book of Daniel (by whomsoever it may have been written) fully embodies the Messiah idea as then current among the people. It was at the time of great political degradation, then, of his countrymen, as well as a longing for deliverance, that Jesus was born at Nazareth. Of his childhood so much is interwoven with legends and fables as to make it altogether impossible that the world should ever have a correct account of the early days of the great law-giver. We may take it for granted, however, that Jesus was at an early age attending the religious schools which at that time had the monopoly of instructing the youth of the country, and that he diligently availed himself of the means, scanty as they were, for improvement. The traits of peace and good-will to all men which are so eminent in the character of Jesus, developed themselves more fully by witnessing the degrading character which the religious strife was beginning to assume; and Jesus not unnaturally sketched out for himself an independent course of action, which, while it enjoined an adherence to the laws of Moses, also condemned the suicidal quarrels of the theologians as destructive of the doctrine of brotherly love. Such a course, and the boldness with which Jesus gave expression to his feelings, not unnaturally must have given great offence to partizans heated with passion, and the result was that

Jesus had to flee for safety, and to lead, with what few disciples he could gather, a rather secluded life among the hills of Galilee. On this point, the "Life of Jesus" by Renan is one of the most masterly expositions extant, and though I may not be able to concur in all his views, I cannot forbear to express my admiration of the talent, sincerity, and moderation displayed by the author in the composition of this famous work.

Throughout his life Jesus was animated by the purest motives, and his heart was fired by religious enthusiasm. What religious enthusiasm means in the East, what sacrifices, ordeals and penances men imbued with it will undergo, we have in the West but a faint conception, though we have living instances without number of this spiritual exaltation in Hindoo life. Jesus himself, in his later days, when he was thoroughly absorbed in his work, may have become convinced that the work he was engaged in, was a mission entrusted to him by God, but as he left no writings behind, and as we have to rely upon his disciples, and, in many cases, even upon men who lived two hundred years later, for all the accounts of his life, his death, and his teachings, it is difficult to say whether Jesus ever claimed for himself a divine origin. Certainly in the Sermon on the Mount, which undoubtedly is genuine, he never assumes to be the son of the Supreme Being in any higher or closer degree than any other mortal man may. The books of the New, as well as of the Old Testament, have suffered so much by interpolations, omissions, and other falsifications, that their claims to authenticity

have been seriously impaired—more especially in late years—when older manuscript copies have come to light in the cloisters of the East, which vary in essential particulars from the versions of the Bible now in common use. The Sermon on the Mount, however, by singular good fortune has come down to us in almost its original state, and the only question regarding it is, whether it was actually delivered at one time, or rather, judging from the disjointed character of its sentences, its parts were collected together after the death of Jesus. This, however, does not affect its value as a brief and concise exposition of the doctrines of Christianity. In this catalogue of the articles of faith, we would not unnaturally look also for a statement of the authority by virtue of which Jesus offered them to his countrymen. But he does not claim here any divine origin, nor does he allude to a mission from God. He simply represents himself in his character of Reformer and enjoins certain duties upon his followers. He says emphatically :

“Think not that I am come to destroy the *law* or the prophets ; I am not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

It is plain from this and the succeeding sentences, that Jesus himself accepted and was a believer in the monotheistic system of Moses. But he went further. While Moses had separated and isolated the Hebrews from the world, Jesus meant to lead the world to the Hebrews. His love for mankind was larger than his love of country, and the new faith planted itself on the doctrine of brotherly love. The career of Jesus

as a preacher or prophet, was only a short-lived one. Like Socrates in Athens, he was accused by his opponents of impiety, and being betrayed and cast into prison, was summarily condemned by an ecclesiastical court and executed.

Silently and slowly did the new sect increase after the Master's death, in spite of persecutions at the hands of secular and ecclesiastical authorities. Among the Jews it made but little progress, as their own quarrels, political as well as religious, fully absorbed their attention, so that but few deigned to investigate the merits of the new faith. But when the Apostles went to Rome, to Athens, to Corinth and to the cities of Asia Minor, as, for instance, Antioch and Ephesus, they found a field ready for the seed. The old paganism, though supported by the State, was effete and ready to die, while the philosophical schools were too exclusive to be greatly patronized by any but the wealthy. They had but a slight hold upon popular affection, and were therefore not able to exert any large influence over the people. When, therefore, the Apostles appeared in the cities of the Roman Empire, as the teachers of a new and purer religion, they found men and women earnest enough to give heed to lessons of truth, in all classes of the community, but especially among the poor people.



## CHAPTER XXVII.

THE charming simplicity of the worship of ancient Christianity no doubt contributed greatly to the adoption of the faith by men who were disgusted with the barbarous and oftentimes immoral rites of polytheism. The world had become surfeited with Bacchanalia and Saturnalia, and the earnest zeal of the Apostles soon found converts in abundance. But the Pantheistic church called in the aid of the powers of the State to crush the new religion, as the Catholic clergy subsequently did to suppress the Reformation, and the State accordingly persecuted the Christians. Now persecution will only intensify spiritual exaltation; it makes religious heroes and martyrs; but it also checks progress and engenders superstition. The early Christians suffered cheerfully and willingly, they bore the cross imposed upon them, but at the same time being, pariah-like, degraded; they lost in course of time, much of the old and grand simplicity of their worship; and adopted imperceptibly, a great deal of the polytheistic system in their faith. The monotheistic feature of the system of Jesus had already become changed in the days of Constantine to that of the Trinity. Nor did the evil stop here. In course of time the Trinity became of even less importance than the mother of Jesus, and to her, instead

of to the Supreme Being, were the supplications of men directed. To add to this multiplicity of gods was the aim of the chief ecclesiastical authority. The apostles first, then the martyrs, and finally the saints took subordinate places in the Christian Pantheon, and all of them had churches built in their honor, and altars consecrated to their worship. Instead of men being brought nearer to God, they were taught that more mediators were needed, that these mediators must be supplicated, and were therefore worthy of adoration.

But it must not be supposed that this change, so radical in its character, was made without opposition. The introduction of the doctrine of the Trinity led to early and violent struggles in the church. The retrograde movement met with especial disfavor from Arius, Archbishop of Alexandria, one of the purest of men, to whom belongs the honor of first boldly declaring against the monstrosity which was afterwards, chiefly by the aid of the political power, fastened upon the church. The history of this struggle is very interesting, especially in showing how the doctrines of faith were changed in the church and how monotheism ceased to be its cardinal principle. Though the Arians were defeated in the contest by the Trinitarians, principally by the aid of the Roman Emperor, their faith still revived, and especially since the effects of the Reformation have made themselves felt. Even before the Reformation the remarkable sect of the Socinians rejected the doctrine of the Trinity because it looked "unreasonable." But the true successors of the Arians are, no doubt, those

composing the liberal wing of the Unitarian church, of whose views the late Theodore Parker was the exponent. This church, while believing in the truth of the doctrines taught by Jesus, as they would believe in all truths, is at all times willing to advance and keep step with the progress of science. Such a church, in my opinion, comes nearer to the requirements of the age than any other which has existed, or which exists to-day. It is looked upon with disfavor by the older churches, and has repeatedly been charged with infidelity. In spite of all opposition it has been steadily gaining ground, and will ultimately become *the* theological school of the land.

## Part III.

### CHAPTER XXVIII.

HAVING now briefly treated, with the exception of Islamism, of the principles of the most prominent creeds which have prevailed, or yet prevail among men, and having also touched upon the philosophical systems of antiquity, I have now to speak of the philosophy of modern times. Though the successor of the old Athenian schools, modern philosophy differs so essentially from the old system, partly through the influence of Christianity, and partly on account of the progress in knowledge, that a succinct account of its origin and advancement will be found not uninteresting.

When by the inroads of the Germanic tribes into its territories, the Roman Empire fell, there followed, necessarily, a retrograde movement in civilization. The conquerors of Rome were barbarians in the purest sense of the word. They had no literature themselves, and had no inclination or love for study or for letters. Learning all of a sudden was at a discount, and from Odoacer (476) till the days of Charlemagne (756)—nearly three hundred years—almost Cimmerian darkness reigned in Europe. More than



nine-tenths of the literary treasures gathered by the Romans from all parts of the vast empire, and concentrated in the libraries of the ancient metropolis of the world, perished by the torch in the hands of the followers of Genseric, of Attila, of Alaric and of others, and had it not been for the preservation of the Byzantine Empire for the time being, the ruin and loss would have been still greater. So great was men's ignorance, and so little was learning esteemed at that period, that even princes did not receive an education fitted for the functions of their station, and were often even unable to read or write. Scholars were then frequently looked upon with suspicion, and, in more than one case, accused of impiety, of being in league with the devil, of practicing the black art, etc. There was only one class of men, indeed, who could safely devote themselves to literature, namely, the ecclesiastics. But even among these, learning was not very highly esteemed, and we read of more than one bishop, who was mightier in the field or in the chase than in the closet. Yet we are mainly indebted to the clergy for whatever fragments were rescued of the vast literary stores at the successive pillages of Italy and Rome. Their cloisters were most generally the only places respected, and, consequently, exempted from the rapacity of the barbarian soldiery, and therefore afforded places for the safe-keeping, not only of treasure, but frequently of women and children.

The clergy having thus become almost the sole possessors of the old records of learning, and being the only class of society who had leisure, because

their means of sustenance were furnished them by the labors of others, were able to devote their time to the pursuit of letters, and the word "clerk," to-day, shows that in olden times the clergy had charge, not alone of spiritual affairs, but of all matters in which learning was necessary. The principal civil offices of the State were filled in all European kingdoms by ecclesiastics, for the simple reason that they alone were, by education, fitted for the discharge of the duties of those offices.

As a natural consequence, the ecclesiastical power increased, and eventually preponderated over the other classes which composed the commonwealth, and at an early day, the clergy was solicitous to preserve to itself for all time to come, the vast influence of which its members had become possessed. That they succeeded in doing so, and continued for centuries to control the politics of Europe, must be ascribed to the numberless political divisions which took place after the downfall of the Carlovingian Empire. The dismemberment of Europe, which followed the death of Charlemagne, created jealousies among princes and nations, which were only too often attended by bloody conflicts. In those days, when each duke, count or marquis strove after political independence, the church alone was a united power, and in its unity consisted its strength. The bishops of Rome, who arrogated to themselves the leadership of the church, soon became the real rulers of Europe. They made or unmade kings, as their interests required, they gave and took lands as rewards or punishments, and they ordered States to

commence wars or to suspend them. Emperors held their stirrups for them, and kings laid their crowns at their feet.

Through the edicts of Gregory VII. the union of the ecclesiastical power became intensified, and for a time it must have looked as if the powers of the pope had become too firmly established ever to be shaken, much less destroyed. Matrimony being forbidden to all members of the clergy, the priests were compelled to devote their whole lives to the interests of the church. The social ties being thereby severed, the political independence of the church was now boldly proclaimed, and bishops looked to Rome instead of to their own sovereigns for their mitres. Lastly, even the kings and princes were made subordinate to the pope and his cardinals, and the immense power which they thereby acquired, made it a comparatively easy task to raise and equip those immense armies which, under the name of Crusaders, poured from all parts of Western Europe into Asia Minor and Syria.

But what happened to the Roman Republic happened also to the Church. What no foreign enemy could have done, its members did themselves. They accomplished the destruction of its political power. The immense treasures which for centuries flowed into Rome, gradually corrupted the priesthood. Boccaccio (1313—1375) more than once mentions in the *Decameron*, the dissolute habits of the clergy, and the scandal which these created in public. Montaigné (1533—1592) in his essays, also, is occasionally severe on the loose conduct of the ecclesiastics; but

the great satire of Rabelais (1495—1553), more than all other writings, exposed the rottenness of the system. The clergy itself is responsible for the destruction of church influence, and its members had fallen already so much into disrepute, that the task of its final overthrow was a matter of comparative ease.

It was in Germany where the storm first burst forth, and the Papal court itself furnished the cause. Driven by the need of money occasioned by his extravagance, Leo X. had sent Tétzel, a Dominican monk, and other agents, across the Alps to Germany, to sell indulgences or pardons of sin to the people. Benighted as the people in that age undoubtedly were, this outrage on their understandings, on their reason, was too great to escape their notice. A priest himself, and a man by no means regarded as highly gifted or learned, had the courage to expose the fraud, and to oppose the powers of the great Church of which he was a member.

But so ripe was the age already for this revolution, and so utterly corrupt had the clergy become, that Luther had comparatively an easy task to accomplish. So rapid was the Reformation, that at his death (1548), the secession was final and complete, and the adherents of the reformed faith were already counted by millions. What perhaps contributed as much as anything else to the spread of the Reformation was the art of printing, which had come into existence but a short time previous to the Reformation, and to this art is also to be attributed the revival of literature in Europe. With its introduction



appropriately closes the darkness of the Middle Ages, and the history of modern times commences. It is from this epoch that we again find mention in the records of the times, of philosophical schools. Out of the long catalogue of illustrious names, I have selected a few, mainly in order to show the progress the great science has made during the past four hundred years.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

THE first name on the list of modern philosophers is undoubtedly Francis Bacon, a name at once infamous in politics and illustrious in philosophy. The greatness of Bacon as a philosopher can scarcely be appreciated at this day, for we can hardly form a conception of the barbarous state of England, or of Europe generally, at the time of the discovery of America. As yet the priests and a small portion of the upper classes had the monopoly of the pursuit of letters, and an author, however able his work, had but few readers to profit by his labors. But the *Essays* and the *Novum Organon* of Bacon, were of such general interest that even in his life-time his fame had spread abroad, and the literary reputation he had acquired saved him from the ignominious punishment his corrupt acts as a Minister of Justice deserved. Though of late his valuable services to physical, as well as to moral philosophy, have been overshadowed by the host of newer and better informed men, it must not be forgotten that Bacon was a pioneer in a hazardous work. So grossly superstitious was yet his age, that when we consider Bacon's natural timidity, we may come to the conclusion that he left much unsaid for fear of persecution. Had he been untrammelled by these consider-

ations, had he not been connected with the court, we might not unreasonably expect to have had works of even a higher character from his pen. Generally, he is described as the forerunner of the school of positive philosophy; that is, the philosophy which is founded upon scientific demonstrations. But as science was as yet in its infancy in Bacon's days compared to its status in our times, it cannot be claimed that he could have made as great a progress in philosophy as he would have made had he lived at a later period. But at all events it may be said with justice, that with him begins the new era in European literature. History, while it has cast a veil over his faults, has, at the same time, gratefully remembered his services.

The next great name we come to is that of Descartes (1596—1650). Like Bacon, this philosopher did not confine himself solely to Moral Philosophy, but occupied himself also with physics and mathematics. His discoveries in the latter branch were of the highest value, and he may be considered the founder of *Analytical Geometry*. His chief merit as a moral philosopher, no doubt, is the boldness of his new method of investigation. Discarding all the old dogmas, he took Nature for his teacher in his philosophical studies, and endeavored by his own investigations and unaided inquiries to find out the aim of all philosophy—the truth. He drew a distinct line in his system between spirit and matter, and held that both must act in conjunction, or concert with each other, in order to be effective.

The successor of Descartes was Spinoza (1632—

1677), one of the most original thinkers to which the world has ever given birth. There is more romance connected with his life than generally falls to the lot of a recluse like Spinoza. Wealth, station and family ties, were alike disregarded by him in his enthusiastic pursuit of science, and the major part of his life was a continual struggle between searching for means of existence and pursuit of knowledge. Unfortunately for the cause of science, disease at an early age undermined his health, and in the midst of his labors death came in to claim the body of the man who was at once, one of the profoundest thinkers and the purest of mortals. The defect in his system, though it is monotheistic, lies in its tendency toward pantheism. *Thought* in man, Spinoza regarded not as a mere attribute of the human soul, but as a part of the Deity itself. Hence he regarded every thought, wish, or feeling in man, as a manifestation of the Supreme Being. It is easy to see that such a course of reasoning eventually tends to the conviction that man himself, or rather his soul, is but a part of the Supreme Being. But in justice to Spinoza, it must be said that he himself, never went so far toward establishing Pantheism, as some of his successors did, who boldly assumed God to be only Nature and nothing else.

Quite different from Spinoza appears John Locke (1632—1704). His reputation as a philosophical writer rests mainly on his celebrated *Essay on the Understanding*, wherein he first divided the source of knowledge as being acquired partly by innate conception, and secondly, by external causes. The



chief fault with Locke's philosophical labors is the fact that he did not go far and deep enough; but this, as in Bacon's case, must be extenuated by the limited progress of science, and also, as we shall hereafter see in the instance of Newton, to the dependence of Locke on the Church of England. Having been reared by that Church, and through its influence advanced, the ties of gratitude naturally had the tendency of biasing the mind of the philosopher, and explains much that seems to be inconsistent in his actions with his words. It is, therefore, no wonder any longer, that Locke, who wrote the strongest argument for *Toleration*, could afterwards advocate the exclusion of Roman Catholics from participation in the political affairs of the nation. But John Locke was neither the first nor the last man who exemplified the difference between preaching and practice. It is only his prominence as a philosopher which makes this contrast more marked in the eyes of the world, and open to the criticism of posterity.

Sir Isaac Newton (1640—1727) does not properly belong here, as he devoted his attention to the investigation of physical science in preference to meditation on the principles of moral philosophy. Still, what little he has written on the latter topic is not uninteresting, and shows us that he must have considered the subject to be of too much importance to be altogether neglected. But Newton was even more timid and cautious than Locke. While Oxford would willingly have pushed him into prominence, while he sat in Parliament and was Master of the Mint, the great philosopher must have hated con-

troversy which either politics or philosophy would have given him, and the skepticism which he harbored was never obtruded on the public eye. While his services were great to physical science, it must always be regretted that so great a mind did not investigate in a larger degree, the more abstruse subject of moral philosophy.

The great German name of Leibnitz (1646—1716) comes next after that of Newton. Like his English contemporary, Leibnitz devoted his attention chiefly to the investigation of physical science, but he also left behind him several important works on moral philosophy which show great originality of thought and conception. The chief characteristic of the system of Leibnitz consists in his assumed *Pre-established Harmony*. Following Descartes in making a division between spirit and matter, Leibnitz maintained that though distinct from each other, there was such a perfect union as necessarily compelled the joint action of body and mind. Another noticeable feature in the system of Leibnitz, was his theory of *Optimism*, whereby he assumed that though the creation might by no means have been perfect, yet, at the same time, it was the best for the wants of man which could have been created.

Lessing (1729—1781) and Moses Mendelssohn (1729—1786), who worked much in common, seem to have followed and adapted to the spirit of the age, the doctrines of Socrates, rather than to have added much original thought to philosophy. Like their great original, their lives were an exemplification of their teachings, and they are moreover the first philoso-

phers of note who worked for toleration and freedom of conscience. Lessing's *Nathan der Weise* is a noble monument for all time to come, while Mendelssohn's *Phædon*, or the *Immortality of the Soul*, is a work for all ages.

But their fame as philosophers was eclipsed by the advent of Kant (1724-1804), whose labors materially influenced, altered and advanced the study of philosophy. His *Critik of Pure Reason*, wherein the limits of the conception of the soul, the world and God are set forth, has long been a standard work of philosophical science. Kant's conception of the Deity, instead of being based upon theological or legendary grounds, was the result of his own reasoning. Through Nature, Kant held that every one could divine the existence of the Supreme Being. Rejecting all traditions on the subject, he held that three things were necessary to man, namely, *Freedom*, *Immortality of the Soul*, and the *Being of God*.

Next to Kant we come to Fichte (1762-1819), who may be considered as the founder of the Idealistic school of philosophy. Assuming the *Ego* as opposed to the *Non-Ego*, Fichte's hypothesis was, that this *Ego* can only become a fact of consciousness or place itself through the antithesis of the *Non-Ego*. However, much of his writing is extremely mystical and tortuous for the mind, and though he had a great reputation in his life-time, he is comparatively unnoticed at present.

The same may be said, almost, of Hegel, a thinker of still deeper powers (1770-1830). This philosopher, in the main, devoted his attention to the disquisition

of the process of existence and of thought. According to Hegel's reasoning, existence, although revealed by innate consciousness, must be explained by thought. Hence his theory of becoming, or *Werden*. It must be remarked as noteworthy, that Hegel, though himself one of the most orthodox Lutherans, laid the foundation and paved the way for Strauss, Rénan, and others less known, who, pursuing the antagonistic speculations of their teacher to a wider extent, have the merit of separating theology from philosophy. That this should be a meritorious proceeding, may look anomalous at first, but when we consider how many theological systems there are, and when we know that *only one* of these can be true, we must award praise to those men who are bold and conscientious enough to assail error, even when it tends to subvert opinions and dogmas which have been handed down to us through centuries, and have been received therefore with veneration by the mass of the people.

Schelling (1775–1854), the last and also the most eminent of the great German philosophers who flourished during the first part of the nineteenth century, commenced his career by following Fichte's "ideal" theory. But this "ideal" was to Schelling's mind less expressive of the Supreme Being than the *Infinite Absolute*, of whose existence men received knowledge through intellectual intuition. Schelling was the most advanced philosophical writer of his time, and found admirers not only in his own country, but throughout Europe and America.

Thomas Reid (1710–1796), and after him Sir Wil-



liam Hamilton (1783–1856), deserve especial mention as the founders of the Scotch philosophical school. In the former's *Inquiry into the Human Mind*, and the latter's *Lectures*, the original system of John Locke is amplified. Speculation at the same time is limited by common sense, and the extent to which it is possible to push progress into the realms of thought, is sharply defined, or more properly speaking, abridged, by what is termed the insufficiency of our mental powers.

Victor Cousin (1792–1867) introduced the German philosophy into France, but it was in an eclectic manner, borrowing a little from each different school, and the most from Hegel, whose theories he followed in their most radical, pantheistic features.

Auguste Comte (1795–1857), the last name we shall mention, may be regarded as really the founder of the positive philosophy; that is, the philosophy whose speculations are founded upon facts demonstrated by science, and may therefore be pronounced to be *positive*, or assured, instead of merely hypothetical. Discarding the theological or fictitious, and the metaphysical or abstract, as systems not suited to the wants of the present age, Comte boldly proclaims that it requires science to establish the object of philosophy; namely, the truth. Meritorious as his labors undoubtedly are, the great fault of his work consists in his peculiar ideas regarding Catholicity and the Reformation. Indeed, according to M. Comte's conception, the Reformation, which effected the separation of the Western European Church was entirely a needless work. He argues to his own

satisfaction, that in course of time Catholicity would have done what the Reformation effected, in a more complete style, and therefore in a more satisfactory manner, had it been left to work it out alone, and had such men as Luther and Calvin never existed. He even endeavors to show that the progress of free inquiry was not advanced, but rather retarded by Protestantism. It is conclusive to his mind, that for true philosophy we must look to Catholic countries, and especially to France. Such views, it is almost needless to add, are not sustained by historical facts, and hardly deserve refutation. Still it may be well to turn back to the times of the Reformation, in order to see what benefits philosophy has derived through this great revolution.

The Reformation found European civilization under the care of the ecclesiastic order, and more especially under the control of the Italian priesthood. Rome directed through its legates and bishops, not only the spiritual affairs of the continent, but it guided also the intellectual course of its nations. It had great power to do good, to promote education, to advance free inquiry; but there is no evidence left to us, nor can there be any adduced to show that the great central ecclesiastical power on the banks of the Tiber was ever solicitous for popular inquiry into spiritual matters. On the contrary, Rome reserved to the clergy this privilege, and dreaded, even before the Reformation, to educate the masses of the people, for fear of weakening the power and influence of the Holy See. Consequently, the Reformation found the nations of Europe in a lamentable state of igno-

rance. The church having established its power through the efforts of Gregory VII., Innocent III., Paul III. and other popes, sought to perpetuate it, not by working hand in hand with the masses, but by everywhere lending its support to establish and strengthen the despotic powers of the kings and princes of the continent. These alliances between Church and State were the hardest yokes any people ever had to bear, and the condition of Europe at the time of the Reformation, showed the pernicious effects of this system in the fullest measure.

On no class of society did the burden fall heavier than on those devoted to agricultural pursuits. The peasants once free—*yeomen*, or common men—became enslaved. Besides being bound to the soil of the estates of the upper classes, whether in the hands of the nobles or those of the church, they were compelled to furnish the fighting element of the nation, and for the services they rendered, they neither received wages nor thanks. In peace as well as in war, they supported the church, the prince and the baron, and what scanty means were left to them for existence was looked upon as gifts from the three upper classes above-mentioned. The burghers or townsmen were in better condition, but it was through their own efforts, unaided by, and often even in opposition to, the church. Indeed the organization of the great Hanseatic League was as much a protest against the encroachments of the ecclesiastic order, as a defence against the arbitrary powers of princes. The instances where in France, Germany, the Netherlands and even Italy, the burghers drove

bishops and abbots out of their towns, are too numerous to mention, and tend to show the hardship of the ecclesiastic rule in places where the church possessed the temporal as well as the spiritual authority.

Another noteworthy fact is, that the cities, and especially those of the Hanseatic league, whose people had made greater progress than the other classes in civilization, were the first to embrace the Reformed faith, and that these cities eventually compelled the princes to follow their example. That the work of the Reformation was not completed, that it was retarded, and its course of progress violently hindered, is perfectly true. But this was not the fault of the people. It was caused by the alliance of the new church with the princes. Where there were no princes, or where their authority was but limited, as for instance in Holland, the Revolution was much more complete, and it is perfectly natural therefore that religious toleration should have been established in that country before it found a footing in any other part of Europe. But as soon as the house of Orange had become powerful and reigned as Stadtholders over the old republic, we find an alliance of Church and State, persecution of dissenters like the Arminians, and an arrest of progress of free inquiry.

But notwithstanding these drawbacks, great as they undoubtedly were, the progress of the Protestant portion of Europe since the Reformation, in literature and science, has been twice as great and even more so, than in purely Catholic countries like Spain and Italy. And we see this same ratio of prog-



ress reproduced across the Atlantic on the American Continent. Whoever will take the slightest trouble to compare Protestant North America with Catholic South America will easily see the superiority of the former. Nor need we, indeed, go so far, since Upper and Lower Canada give us a striking example to show how much the Reformation—bringing with it greater freedom of inquiry—has benefited mankind. It must be admitted that the Protestants themselves, even when discouraged by the State, steadily pursued their inquiries. They did not in their course of investigation reach the same result, and consequently the formation of sects or different churches was the necessary action. The ecclesiastical power thereby became weakened; but it cannot be said that philosophical science or truth were injured by it. Nowhere is this better illustrated, and nowhere has the cause of philosophy been more benefited by this revolution, than in the United States. Since the early colonial times, the division of the churches has been too great and too distinct to allow of any perfect union. The want of a combined influence will prevent them for all time to come from acquiring political power, and so well is this known to the clergy themselves, that with few exceptions, they have forborne to interfere or meddle, in affairs of this nature. While we hear of a *parti prêtre*, of ultramontaniam in Mexico, in Peru, and in other South American republics, we look in vain for such a manifestation of clerical power in the great republic of the North.

Great Britain herself, which M. Comte describes

with true Gallic antipathy, as having been retarded by its oligarchical influences and by its union of Church and State, represents the good effects of the Reformation, better than any other country in Europe, especially when we compare the condition of the lower classes in that country, with that of France, the most advanced of Catholic nations. The impetus given to the advancement of knowledge by the secession of the large majority of the nation from the Church of Rome, was so great that it overbalanced the effects of the retrograde movement of the union of Church and State. Notwithstanding all the power the Episcopal Church of England derives from its alliance with the temporal authority, it has never received into its fold one-half of the population of either England or Wales. It never took root in Scotland; and is but a badge of Saxon slavery in Ireland. It is due likewise to the Dissenters in England to add, that they have striven earnestly for a purification and simplicity in theology, and that though not all strictly monotheistic, they have prepared the way for its ultimate establishment.

In the United States, where the reader is aware there is no connection whatever between Church and State, the great majority of the population cannot be even classed as members of any particular church; and, in fact, scarcely one-third, or perhaps not one-fourth, are professed members and regular visitants at public worship. Yet it would be wrong to assert that this great majority of non-professors were irreligious men; or, that they did not acknowledge the existence of the Supreme Being; or, that

they were not grateful to the Creator for his gifts. On the contrary, we can boldly assert, that there is a no more truly religious people on the face of the globe, than the citizens of the great republic, and for the reason, mainly, that the inquiry after truth is here not limited. It shows that men can, unguided, pursue their investigations, and when they do so properly, that they cannot fail to become convinced of the greatness of God, and appreciate man's true position on earth. All this is due certainly to the Reformation. Had the Reformation not taken place, the United States, it may be taken for granted, would never have existed. There might have been colonies or kingdoms, but never a land of freedom.

Though in the early settlement of the country there was an attempt made to establish a theocratic form of government in some of the New England colonies, which was really put in operation in Massachusetts by the Puritans, yet it failed to keep control of public affairs, for the simple reason that such a form of government was no longer suitable to the advanced state of civilization. The clergy itself, though its members were uniformly respected, and though the colonists cheerfully contributed to their support, felt that the post of leader in a new country, hardly yet conquered from the red man, was more fitted for men engaged in secular than in spiritual affairs. Even here the clergy, however, retained for a long period, almost a monopoly of the education of the people, till finally after the war of the Revolution, the States, having become fixed and permanent governments, made ample and liberal pro-

vision, to provide public education within their respective commonwealths, for all classes; made instruction a duty to be exercised by the State, and not alone by one class of the people.

A remarkable contrast, as I have already observed, one which clearly shows the beneficial character of the Reformation on human progress, may be seen when we compare the United States with the republics of Central and South America. In these latter countries, richer in wealth and more favored by nature, the Protestant element was totally wanting when the people proclaimed their independence from Spain. If the Reformation, then, as it is alleged by M. Comte, really exerted everywhere a retrograde influence, we should surely have reason to expect in South America, where Catholicity was left undisturbed, where no Reformation came, and Luther and Calvin were not thought of, the largest degree of progress. Quite the contrary effect is, however, met here. The progress of the Latin race in South America has been of slow growth, even slower than in Spain. While North America has largely contributed to science, and we find men like Franklin, Morse, Jackson and others, in the annals of progress, we cannot find a single name of this favored part of the world which has contributed to the development of science. While Humboldt, Bonpland, Stephens, Squier and others, could find great opportunities for acquiring knowledge in those countries, the native inhabitants could not appreciate their own country themselves, because there had been no progress among them; nor could there be any as long as the



Church was continued as a State institution, and was opposed to all reforms which were asked for, through fear of weakening its power.

A notable contest in France ought to be noticed in connection with this matter, namely, the struggle between the University of Paris and the *parti prêtre* of France, for the control of popular education. There the Church of Rome had been excluded from having a voice in the secular education of the people, yet through the supineness, if not the collusion, of the Cabinet, the sole direction of education was in the reign of Louis Philippe, wrested from the University. The clergy received the *power of visitation*. The result of this measure was foreseen by a few men like Cousin, Thiers and Roger Collard, but the effects were not felt till years afterwards, even till to-day, when one-fifth of all the children throughout France are deprived of facilities for acquiring an education.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

I HAVE dwelt on this topic longer than others, because I do deem it necessary to show that philosophy, and especially progressive philosophy, requires for the extension of its usefulness, a system of education which is untrammelled by the sectarian dogmas of any one of the numerous creeds of Christian theology. Indeed, education in the United States is forced into the hands of the State, for the simple reason that were we willing to give it to the clergy, we should be called upon to decide upon which set of ecclesiastics to bestow it. We should have to say which, in our opinion, was the true and orthodox faith. Now as each Church claims to be the only orthodox one, all the others must be wrong. It is easy to foresee that a selection of one church out of all others as being the true church, would not satisfy the majority of the people even should it be done. There would be, not without cause, great dissatisfaction among the people, and education would not be advanced by the dissensions which would be sure to follow. Again, were we to parcel out the functions of education to the clergy of the different creeds, we should destroy the uniformity of the system of education, and thereby injure its character. The education of the people should be uniform as well as uni-

versal, but in parceling it out among the churches we should institute as many systems of instruction as there are churches among us. The necessity for the separation of secular from clerical education has been fully realized in late years, and it has had the tendency to weaken the power of the clergy. Men have begun to make a distinction between moral philosophy and theology. The former is now considered as an essential branch of secular education, while the latter has been left under the control of the ecclesiastics. Whatever dogmas these may teach in private establishments, whether in churches or schools, the State is not responsible for, but the philosophy taught in schools, endowed and supported by the State, should be strictly monotheistic, and it ought not to be hampered by the theological views of any creeds.

The monotheism of philosophy differs from that of theology, and is preferable to it because it is the same everywhere. But it is not so with the monotheism of theology. For what may be Christianity at St. Petersburg is heresy at Rome, and what is orthodox at Madrid is an abomination at Aberdeen. The faith which claims its origin through Jesus Christ, varies so widely in different quarters of the world, that it is no longer possible to decide which is true Christianity and which is not. Monotheistic Philosophy, while it is based on the same principle on which Jesus founded his faith, is the same everywhere, and teaches the great lessons of love and truth, not through books or catechisms, but through the contemplation of nature.

Again, while theology is eminently conservative, while it adheres tenaciously to certain articles or doctrines of faith which are regarded as unchangeable, philosophy is at all times ready to keep progress with the advance of science. Who does not recollect, for instance, with what fierce resistance the clergy fought against the investigations of Copernicus and Galileo? Even in our own times, geology is denounced, because its demonstrations happen not to sustain the cosmogony of Genesis. That there should be a strife of this nature between Science and Theology, may, at the first glance, seem rather anomalous, yet if we investigate more profoundly, we shall find that such a struggle must come. When we consider the reverence with which all traditions—handed down for centuries from age to age—are held by the religious world, and especially by the clergy, we shall find it perfectly reasonable that all innovations tending to impair the validity of these traditions are destined to meet with the most determined opposition at the hands of those who believe the old doctrines to be true, and who regard any deviation from them as sacrilegious. This opposition, in its most intense form, is what we call fanaticism, one of the most violent of human paroxysms. This fanaticism has already cost the world millions of lives. The religious wars have been at once the most bloody, the most cruel, and the most senseless. Against fanaticism reason becomes powerless, and it is only when its fury is spent that men are apt to see the cruel folly of which they have been guilty. If, therefore, the Carthaginians, under the spell of



this fanaticism, could throw their children into the fire as a sacrifice to Moloch, if Catholics could deliver thousands of Jews and Protestants to the faggots of the Inquisition, it should be no wonder that in our day, men who hold different views regarding religion or the Supreme Being, should arouse the opposition of the leaders of the theological schools, that they should be branded as infidels, atheists, or heresiarchs, and that they should be singled out for the scorn and condemnation of the world.

But as the love of truth is innate in man, and as science is really only occupied with the acquisition of truth, fanaticism in the end must give way to reason, and when truth shall prevail, becomes only a question of time. The process may be slow, but it is nevertheless certain. Though it may be a task of centuries, the activity of science is ceaseless. Each year, each day, each hour, adds to its progress, and the onward movement of philosophy always keeps step with the corresponding march of civilization. While theology, or rather sectarian theology, has been compelled to be stationary, whenever fixed canon laws were made, and unalterable dogmas proclaimed, philosophy has been forced to be progressive in order to be beneficial to mankind. While borrowing from the theological system the maxims of morality adapted to the welfare of humanity, it has at the same time rejected whatever was inconsistent with the demonstrations of science, and, in many cases, even contrary to the laws of nature.

We know, for instance, that the ancients had but very imperfect knowledge regarding not only the

heavenly bodies, but even of the earth itself. It was not till the first circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan's vessels that people became convinced that the earth was a globe, that it was round. Steam and electricity were latent and unknown powers until quite recently. The geological investigations have as yet barely revealed to us a thousandth part of what we ought to know regarding the composition and formation of the earth. The less we know of these matters, the farther we are from the truth; and the more knowledge we acquire of them the nearer are we approximating to it, and thus by learning the truth, by cultivating science, we are necessarily progressing in philosophy. The field of inquiry widens as we progress in learning, the old limits are extending themselves as if by magic, and the scope for inquiry stretches out in correspondence with the extent of civilization, with the ability of men to master the truth. We have, especially in physics, progressed so far, that we often ask ourselves whether we are likely to leave anything for our successors to achieve. We have certainly done our share of the work, but our successors, more fortunate perhaps than we are, have even a larger field than we had given to us, because they have more accurate premises—thanks to the progress of the age—from which they can begin their investigations.

If they are more favored in this respect than we are, we also know that we have had a corresponding advantage over our predecessors. We knew, for example, more of the laws of nature, of their workings and of their results. *Almost* all of us have begun to

understand that whatever is incompatible with these laws, must be *ipso facto* impossible. When we, therefore, hear of men being changed into animals, and women instantaneously transformed into pillars of salt, we are led to say, after due reflection and with our knowledge of the laws of nature, that such things could not be, and therefore we are forced to reject these legendary tales as unworthy of belief.

The advance of science has placed in our hands, what our ancestors did not possess, more ample facilities for investigation. It is hardly a matter of surprise therefore, that miracles should cease to be performed, and those reputed to have been done in former ages, must undergo scientific criticism. There is no doubt that ignorance is responsible for much of the hallucination our ancestors labored under, when they saw something wonderful, such as an eclipse, for instance ; but a great part of these so-called miracles must be set down as wicked impostures by men who pretended to perform them, or by those who pretended to have seen them performed.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

IT may, perhaps, be charged—and it certainly has been often—that, with the decay of the theological system, there would be a change for the worse in the moral condition of the human race. But the charge is fallacious, and cannot be sustained by facts or evidence. On the contrary, whoever will take the trouble to institute the proper investigation, will not fail to be convinced that the progress of philosophy has cultivated—in a corresponding degree—morality among men. In all classes of society at the present time, for instance, we see a refinement of manners, of living, and even of speech, which contrasts favorably with the customs of the preceding ages. The improved system of laws we possess, shows better than all other evidences the improvement which Society—or Man collectively—has made. Even our penal laws, by the mitigation of severity, show that the sentiment of brotherly love is more intense. The condemned felon is even regarded as a brother in his last moments, instead of being brutally quartered, or broken across the wheel. Even now man looks upon the taking of human life as a judicial punishment, to be a grave mistake, thereby ignoring the old Scriptural law of retaliation of “an eye for an eye.”

But even more apparent is the benefit of civiliza-



tion when we regard the condition of the law-abiding portion of the community. There seems to be a greater degree of comfort, even among the lower classes. Slavery and serfdom have been abolished in spite of theological vindication of the system of bondage, while education has taught self-reliance to men who formerly had almost no will of their own. The upper classes, those who by superior wealth or intellect, are the leaders of Society, have been perhaps benefited the most. I must here, in order to illustrate this position, quote the remarks of a lady who had borrowed of me a copy of Plutarch's *Lives*. On her returning the book, I asked her how she was pleased with it. She replied, "that it was quite interesting, but it seemed strange that almost all these celebrated men mentioned by Plutarch had met with violent and miserable deaths." It is certainly a strange fatality, but after all, one easily explained, when we take into consideration the spirit of antiquity, when we notice how little value men set on human life, how ready, even on the smallest provocation, our ancestors were for bloodshed, and how invariably the majority of their best and most prominent men fell victims to the dagger, the scaffold, the stake, or even the poisoned cup.

Our heroes happily—and we have many of them—live in happier times. Their prominence among their fellows rarely hastens their end, and when an event of this kind happens, as, for instance, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, it horrifies the world. Nor do crimes perpetrated by persons high in authority, or of high standing in society, any longer es-

cape due punishment if the execution of the laws is entrusted to faithful guardians. In the Middle Ages the baron who killed his villein went unpunished, and princes could at pleasure fine, imprison, and slaughter their subjects. All these outrages were perpetrated when the ecclesiastical power was at its greatest height. Those days are gone, thanks to the progress of philosophy, one of whose greatest triumphs is *the establishment of the supremacy of the law, and the rendering of all men equal before its tribunals.*

The secular law, the offspring of philosophy, has often had to be changed and modified to meet the wants of the times ; but there is no change in theological law unless it be through the revolutionary agency of a movement like the Reformation. With the advance of science, with increased means of learning, with more ample knowledge of the laws of nature, it became a matter of necessity to adopt, not alone different laws, but different theories also, from those on which the old laws were based. For instance, while the Church of England endured persecution at the hands of James II., many of its distinguished prelates contended that to depose a consecrated king was a sacrilegious act, a great crime ; but the establishment of such a theory in our day would provoke only a smile, even among the members of the Anglican clergy.

Physics even more than jurisprudence have had to encounter the opposition of the theological spirit, because, through their investigations, they came to a direct issue with the old traditions which form the foundation of the theological system ; and it was not

without a hard struggle that theology was forced to succumb. A few illustrations will suffice. None of us, for instance, believe now, that, as is recorded in Joshua, the sun and moon stood still, since we know by the demonstrations of science that such a cessation of activity in these heavenly bodies would be contrary to the laws of Nature, and therefore impossible. Further, none of us believe that God first created the earth and afterwards the sun, the moon and the other stars, and that these great bodies were solely created for the purpose of affording light to the inhabitants of the earth. This account of the earth's or rather the world's cosmogony has long ago been discarded as legendary, but before the world's belief in the old tradition could be shaken, the innovators had to incur the wrath of the clergy. Were not the evidence still extant, we could hardly believe the persecution some of the greatest philosophers of comparatively modern times had to endure at the hands of the clergy before the latter were compelled to acknowledge the truth. It required and still requires, great courage to come forward and proclaim these great truths, and timidity and intimidation may for a time have prevented progress, but such checks at all times are only temporary, for there will always be found men courageous enough to expose errors, even though they may have been believed for a hundred or for a thousand years.

These remarks apply with particular force to Christianity, as understood by the theological school, as opposed to progressive philosophy. We must, in speaking of this species of Christianity, consider the

condition of the Jews when Jesus appeared among them as a reformer. We must next endeavor to find out what he taught himself, and what and how much was added by his apostles and disciples. We must also compare the state of science, both at the birth of Christianity and in the ages immediately succeeding, with its condition in our own day. There is also to be taken into account the aspect of Nature—the difference in climate, food and soil, which more than any other cause separates communities of men and establishes their national characteristics, their laws, their customs and even their faith. It may justly be said that the aspect of Nature, and consequently the national characteristics occasioned thereby, did as much to prevent the spread of the Reformation among the Italians and the Spaniards as the political power exercised by either the popes or the kings of Spain. On the other hand, it was but natural that for opposite reasons the Reformation should have spread over the northern part of Europe, notwithstanding all the obstacles which the combined authority of Church and State placed in its way. For by the severity of the climate, the greater sterility of the soil and the necessity of more wearisome labor to procure food, the northerner has to reflect more, he has to study more closely the laws of nature in order to provide for his existence, than his southern neighbor whose wants Nature provides for more readily.

Now we have already seen that the more we are compelled to commune with Nature, and the deeper we have to study her laws, the better we can com-



prehend the workings of the Creator and the nearer we approach to perfection. Then, further, those in the north being compelled to work in order to provide against want in the winter-time, amassed wealth much more rapidly than those people who lived in a more congenial climate, who had not the same reason for making as great exertion of their physical powers to provide the means of existence. The natural result was, that in the north there was eventually greater wealth, and consequently greater leisure. More men could be spared from the farms and the workshops, and these men devoted their time to literary pursuits. I need but refer to the case of the Netherlands, perhaps now the richest country in Europe, in order to illustrate the practical result of this state of things. While Italy, in Cæsar's time, was already the most civilized country of Western Europe, a great part of Holland had not as yet been reclaimed from the sea. After the great migratory period of the Teutonic race had come to an end, the people living on the delta of the Rhine being prevented from pursuing any longer a wandering life, had to devote their attention to agricultural pursuits. But in order to do this, they had not only to defend themselves against the inclemency of the winters, but also against the encroachments of the sea. They had not alone to lay aside large stores of food, but they had also to throw up dykes and build other defences against the waves of the ocean. When their population increased, they had to reclaim more land, and in order to provide highways for intercourse, they had to dig canals. The great industry called forth

by the necessities of the nation, soon brought wealth. The Netherlands, already in the Middle Ages, were proverbial for their riches, and their artisans were so skilled that large numbers of Flemish artisans were invited to England, where they laid the foundation of the English woolen factories.

Material industry is the first essential element in civilization, and neglect of that industry will soon produce a decline in civilization and make a return to superstition and barbarism not only possible, but even necessary. The Arabs serve as a practical illustration of this position. Living a nomadic life previous to the advent of Mohammed, they became a united nation under the banner of the great prophet. By their exertions they conquered vast countries, founded large empires, and became eminent in scientific pursuits. Their kingdoms in Spain were the wonder of the age, and their schools the glory of the times. But industry soon relaxed, the kingdoms became weaker, the schools declined, and both eventually fell to rise no more. Spain herself owes a great deal of her decline to her driving out her most industrious inhabitants, the Moriscoes, and Louis XIV. impoverished France by his revocation of the edict of Nantes, when thousands of industrious Huguenots left the country and sought new homes.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHILE progress has oftentimes been retarded through the influence of the theological spirit, at other times its very opposition to the demands of the age has in a great degree accelerated the advance of civilization, by calling attention to the nature of the controversy and interesting men more in it than they otherwise would have been. The latest dogmas adopted by the Catholic church, the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin and the Infallibility of the Pope form two striking illustrations. We can think of no measures so totally at variance with the spirit of the age as these two dogmas, and it is no wonder, therefore, that a great many members of the Catholic church itself should oppose the incorporation of such doctrines of faith into their creed, and by their protest weaken its power.

The adoption, therefore, into any theological system of such retrograde tenets, while it may retard the progress of those who embrace them, has no influence to retard the progress of philosophy generally; but on the contrary, it will increase the numbers of the opposition by the accession of those who cannot be convinced, and therefore cannot submit to those tenets. In an age which demands more freedom of thought, there will certainly be found few men will-

ing to declare the judgment of one man infallible, even though that man be the greatest bishop in the world. Assumptions of this character indeed appear almost ridiculous, and are contrary to the spirit of the times. They appear better calculated to lead men back to the dark ages. But neither Church nor State can do this.

Were another inroad of barbarian people possible, were Europe and America to be overrun by millions of savages, a return to superstition and blind credulity might perhaps be possible, and Macaulay's New Zealander sitting on the ruins of London bridge might become a reality. But modern civilization is so essentially different from the civilization of antiquity, that future historians will hardly be called upon to indite long chapters on its decline and fall. The theological system received a blow by the Reformation, the severity of which was hardly felt at first. It took decades and centuries to do the work; and even now the revolution commenced by Luther and Calvin is still going on; for revolution here means progress, and progress is never final.

That the Reformation did not satisfy all, that it did not accomplish all it should have done, is due solely to the incomplete civilization of the age in which it commenced. As science progressed, however, the emancipation of men from the theological system became stronger, and the new sects, as founded by Luther and Calvin, soon felt the necessity of calling upon the temporal power to prevent schismatics from alienating the members of the new faith from the church. Very soon these new theological



organizations persecuted not only the newer sects, but each other also; and, for instance, until recently, the Lutheran church in Sweden was as proscriptive as the Catholic church was in Spain under Philip II. The similarity of proscription in this respect between the new and the old churches is no less remarkable than natural, and must be attributed to the desire of the clergy to preserve the laws and polity of the faith intact, and without amendment. This conservative policy is indeed a fatal defect in any religious system which works under an established code of theological laws. These laws not being susceptible of amendment or alteration, become fixtures, and eventually obsolete, because though well adapted for the particular age in which they were made, are often incompatible in after times. We have already seen that laws must change from time to time, and theological laws must, in order to be effective, be remodeled or renewed. For they were intended to confer benefits on those for whose guidance they were devised; but when that generation has passed away, the laws must also change or pass away.

But a religion or a creed once established, becomes, by the force of circumstances, conservative and stationary. "Make a hedge around the law," suggested the writers in the Talmud, nearly two thousand years ago, and, acting on this principle, the theologians from that day to this have hedged in their dogmas, in order to prevent alterations or innovations. Only reluctantly and slowly have the theologians gone forward, lagging behind while philosophy kept steadily in the advance. Even to their own followers their

march was often too snail-like, and the great theological rear-guard has seen no inconsiderable bodies separate themselves from its corps and hasten on to the front. These in turn were denounced as apostates, heretics, etc., but these secessions have told upon the influence of the theological system and weakened its power. In fine the church has had to make concessions.

Concessions made to an aggressive enemy are fatal, and they are doubly so when they are compelled to be made through exhaustion after a violent struggle. The ecclesiastical power was compelled to make, involuntarily, a great concession when it had to acknowledge the secession effected by the Reformation. It only did so, as we shall see hereafter, in consequence of its exhaustion in one of the bloodiest of wars, and from that time, its power was broken. Not only was its political influence gradually destroyed, but it had to modify its standard of orthodoxy itself, in order to keep step with the progress of the age. Nor was the Catholic Church alone in this position. The creeds of Luther and of Calvin in a short time after their institution, became almost as conservative as those of the mother-church herself, and they both looked with disfavor on all who attempted to meddle with the principles and discipline as laid down and established by their founders. The new churches, instead of advancing, acted on the defensive; and ere long, great bodies of its members seceded from them, because they saw that the theological inertness was not suited to the wants of the age, to the progress of science. The consequence

of this was, that what was originally one church, is to-day divided into a multitude of churches, each of which claims to be the only true church. They all, more or less, attempt to connect the old theological system with scientific progress, and in order to do so, they have themselves to make more or less progress, to concede more and more and to embrace more liberal and enlightened views. But though clerical authority may be weakened thereby, the morality of mankind has improved wonderfully, because men have found a better guide in philosophy.

Keeping on quietly but steadily in the path of duty, the great science has continued to search for the truth. She has demonstrated much; but who can tell what still remains to be done. Much evidently; and our progress, great though it has been, will appear only small to the coming generations. Posterity will hardly be able to realize the difficulty we have experienced in discarding the old clerical guides who have led us so many years, and in taking philosophy as our pilot, in their stead, in the journey of life. Hard as the task was, it had to be achieved, on account of the political, as well as social changes, in the civilized world.

In the first place, the accumulation of wealth during the past four hundred years has been so rapid, as to increase to an extraordinary degree, the number of those who could relinquish manual labor; who having the means of subsistence provided for them could devote their leisure to literary pursuits. Even the Church could not, had they all been willing to enter it, have provided room for this great non-

producing class, and the monopoly of learning, which the clergy formerly enjoyed, was consequently destroyed. The second cause for this change was the division of the Church itself by the Reformation. Of this, I have already spoken at length. The third great cause was the impetus given to science and literature by the invention of printing, by its multiplying to an enormous degree a means of disseminating knowledge, not alone among the clergy, but among the masses of the people. But the fourth cause, which contributed as much, if not more than the others, to the change of relations between the ecclesiastics and the laity, was the great extension of commerce.

The great voyages at sea which men were compelled to make, owing to the great discoveries of Columbus and Vasco de Gama, developed knowledge of an entirely different character from that of the ancients, of which the ecclesiastics were almost the sole possessors during the Middle Ages. This new knowledge could not be learned from men who, during their lifetime were secluded in cloisters, who did not mingle with the world, who neither undertook voyages by sea nor land, and who consequently were ignorant of what in our days almost any school-boy knows. Though the ecclesiastic might have given a good plan for building a church or a dwelling, it was not expected that he should give a plan for building a ship, designed for crossing the ocean. The wonders of the New World, its botany and zoology, the study of the winds, of astronomy, of geography, all called for new teachers, and these teachers



could no longer be found among the ecclesiastics, but had to be looked for in the ranks of the laity. Thus it happened that the clergy lost its control over the educational interests of the people. But here, also, the theological spirit made a determined resistance. We have already seen that both astronomy and geology were singled out for attack, because their demonstrations were in direct opposition to the traditions of the Scriptures. Philosophy, however, had to bear the brunt of the battle, and even as late as the Eighteenth Century, men like Gibbon and Hume were villified by the ecclesiastics on account of their opinions. But though having a desire to prosecute, the clergy had lost its power. The principles of toleration, of freedom of conscience, though not then as ample and liberal as they are to-day, had already taken root.

A few words regarding the growth of religious liberty in later times will here not be out of place.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

JUST one hundred and one years after the commencement of the Reformation, on the shores of the Elbe, the great Thirty Years' War begun, which terminated, as far as treaties can terminate, hostilities between the partisans of the Catholic and Protestant churches. For over one hundred and twenty years Western Europe had been convulsed by theological quarrels. Four generations had passed away since the days of Martin Luther, and all Europe, but more especially the German Empire, was so exhausted as to make peace necessary to all parties. Thousands of lives had perished and millions of treasure had been expended, ere the theological spirit could be brought to make concessions. The victory was dearly bought, yet life and treasure had been well expended, since it was a victory of freedom. The great Westphalian Treaty was the first distinct announcement of religious toleration. The international law for the first time made it obligatory on the individual States to protect their inhabitants in the exercise of their religious duties. It was the first treaty of modern times, indeed, by which the rights of the people received recognition. The ecclesiastical spirit, moreover, had been so weakened—the Church heretofore claiming to be independent, had to subordinate itself

to the power of the State,—that it no longer could either organize crusades itself, or compel princes to persecute Dissenters. The Catholic countries of the south of Europe, as well as of America, derived but little benefit from this treaty, as the Reformation had been early repressed by the temporal authority, but this retention of the old faith proved disadvantageous to their progress for centuries.

In the northern parts of Europe and America, however, the treaty which terminated the Thirty Years' War proved to be almost as great a charter of freedom as *Magna Charta*. Though the political power of princes was greatly strengthened and kept unimpaired till the days of the French Revolution, the Westphalian Treaty undoubtedly laid the foundation for this great revolution, by granting freedom of conscience, and that this great boon has improved and developed free political institutions, we have ample evidence.

The modern philosophical schools, indeed, may be said to date from the Westphalian Treaty. They could hardly have existed during the long years of this bloody strife; for literature, as well as laws, sleep in war-time. When peace, however, was re-established, the revival in arts and science began a healthy and steady growth. Still it was not without a struggle, even then, that philosophy was allowed free scope when it began to be cultivated and studied by the laity. The clergy of the different creeds saw almost as great an enemy in this science as they regarded the opposing creeds to be, and it was partly in consequence of the quarrels among the theological schools

themselves, that philosophy for a time preserved an existence. We to-day, indeed, have but a faint conception of the hatred the opposing theologians entertained for their rivals. Of all the virtues, Christian charity was the least they practiced. Luther abominated John Calvin, and John Calvin and Beza detested Luther. The Reformers looked upon the Lutherans as infidels, and the latter upon the former as heretics. When the teachers of the new faith had the power, they used it as mercilessly as the priests of the old church did, and the burning of an unfortunate Spaniard, Michael Servetus, at the stake, for heresy, will remain forever a stigma on the character of John Calvin.

In England the Puritans were persecuted by the Anglicans, and in New England these Puritans did not scruple to persecute the Quakers and other malignants. The persecution of witches is too well known to need more than mere mention. The immortal Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island, stands gloriously and alone in opposition to this religious fanaticism. He is the first ecclesiastic of modern times who preached and practiced freedom of conscience. The experiment which he initiated in his new colony, contrasted so favorably with the intolerance prevalent elsewhere, that it did not fail to excite admiration, and ultimately, imitation.

The good work which this great apostle of freedom commenced was continued by succeeding generations. It spread not only over the United States, but also over Europe. While the clergy of the different creeds continued to assail each other in their



pulpits and in print, the philosophical schools which arose began to attract more and more public attention, and their principles were studied more closely. In the meantime ecclesiastical literature began to decline in importance, and it is a fact worthy of notice, that, notwithstanding the large number of theological works published since the end of the Thirty Years' War, only one, the *Pilgrim's Progress*, has attained a wide-spread celebrity. Whoever will read attentively this remarkable work, cannot fail to discover the reasons for its obtaining so great a hold upon the public attention. It differs from all theological works in this, that it was not written for any one sect or church, but for Christianity. It is not exclusive or one-sided, but of universal usefulness. Catholics, as well as Protestants, can read it with interest and profit.

Another noteworthy fact connected with theological literature is the great attention bestowed of late years upon the Bible. The investigation into the origin of its different parts, and the able and thorough criticisms which it has undergone, have shown that unauthorized alterations, omissions, and additions have been made from time to time in the original text. In order to suit the needs of the Church, words and sentences have been added or omitted, both in the Old and New Testaments, but more especially in the latter, and several of the Gospels have been by Biblical scholars accounted to be spurious. Generally the manuscripts of the Tenth Century have been adopted for the version of the New Testament, but the discovery in recent years

of manuscripts as old as the early part of the fourth century have created no small interest, not alone among theologians, but among Christians generally, and more especially among those who labor for a return to the principles of the primitive Church.

I cannot close this chapter without saying a few words regarding the remarkable works of Strauss and Renan. Both of these works come from men who are, or were, professed Christians and even theologians—the one a Protestant, the other a Catholic. Devoting the best portions of their lives to the investigation of the origin of the faith and the elucidation of the biography of its founder, they come finally, and we see by their books, reluctantly, to the conclusion that Jesus was in the first place, a mortal man only, as other men are; secondly, that much which is now incorporated in the Christian religion is not what Jesus taught; and, finally, that the tendency of the age is toward pure monotheism. Both of these writers, and especially Renan, evidently wish to save the Church, but they wish to save it and preserve it in a reconstructed form. It is needless to add that at the hands of the clergy they have met with the most severe opposition and the strongest denunciations. Their works, however, have had a wide-spread publicity, and the ideas enunciated in them have to a great degree been supported by the philosophical schools.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE progress of philosophy in acquiring knowledge would be worthless and insufficient were it not based upon evidence or testimony; for the facts elicited by this testimony not only extend thereby our knowledge, but furnish the requisite proofs. This is what in science is termed demonstration, and it is a maxim that what has been correctly demonstrated we know to be true. This is the maxim on which Auguste Comte has founded the school of the positive philosophy. But in order to gather this evidence and the necessary facts, we need not alone to employ our own minds but those of others. Had we to rely on our own exclusively, there would be hardly any progress, and in order to attain to a high degree of civilization, the banding together of men in nations is necessary. This has been so eloquently, yet briefly stated by an eminent legal writer,\* that I can do no better than reproduce his views on the subject:

“But, in fact, the knowledge acquired by an individual, through his own perception and reflection, is but a small part of what he possesses, much of what we are content to regard and act upon as knowledge having been acquired through the per-

\* Greenleaf on Evidence. Part I., chapter iii., § 7.

ception of others. It is not easy to conceive that the Supreme Being, whose wisdom is so conspicuous in all his works, constituted man to believe only upon his own personal experience, since in that case, the world could neither be governed nor improved, and society must remain in the state in which it was left by the first generation of men. On the contrary, during the periods of childhood, we believe implicitly almost all that is told us, and thus are furnished with information which we could not otherwise obtain, but which is necessary at the time for our present protection, or as the means of future improvement. This disposition to believe, may be termed instinctive. At an early period, however, we begin to find that of the things told us, some are not true, and thus our implicit reliance on the testimony of others is weakened; first, in regard to particular things in which we have been deceived; then in regard to persons whose falsehoods we have detected; and, as these instances multiply upon us, we gradually become more and more distrustful of such statements, and learn by experience the necessity of testing them by certain rules. Thus, as our ability to obtain knowledge by other means increases, our instinctive reliance on testimony diminishes, by yielding to a more rational belief."

Nations are not unjustly likened to individuals, and the infancy of a nation may not inaptly be compared to the childhood of man. Our knowledge in the infancy of national life was small. We had learned, perhaps, a great deal, but there came a time for us to unlearn much of what we knew, because the



knowledge we had gathered was false and spurious to a large degree, the facts not warranted nor borne out by the testimony adduced. In its place our old store of knowledge was increased by knowledge of a better sort, when we had increased in ability and were able to adopt a more rational belief. The increase of knowledge by evidence of demonstrations of science, has especially given us better ideas, or a clearer conception of the Supreme Being than we could have hoped to obtain without such aid.

We have already seen that man possesses an inward consciousness, and that this consciousness teaches us the existence of a superior power. By evidence and testimony, by comparing the feelings of other men with our own, we see that this consciousness is not innate in any one man alone, but that all men in every age and in all parts of the world, did and do, possess it. But this consciousness at the same time reminds us of our inferiority. Even though we are all convinced of the presence of a Supreme Being, it is here still that our knowledge stops short. When we ask ourselves "What is this Supreme Being? What is he like?" can our consciousness come then to our help and explain the great unsolved mystery?

We have to content ourselves with only secondary evidence to guide us through this mental labyrinth, since no man has seen the Supreme Being, has spoken to him, or even heard him speak. We, then, only know God by his works, but even they are as incompetent to answer as we are, and even more so. The beasts of the forest and the birds of the air,

could they tell us of God, had they a tongue to speak? But God's works—whether we take them singly, as, for instance, the worm that creepeth on the earth, or collectively, as the whole universe—are of so imposing a character in greatness, beauty and usefulness, that we may well say he who made them is all-powerful. We attribute to him the creation of the world, but we neither know how it was created, nor for what purpose it was created. Here even the slender thread of secondary evidence we possess breaks off abruptly and our consciousness remains the only guide to tell us that this Supreme Being whom no one saw create the world, whom no one has seen, no one has spoken to, and no one heard speak, was and is the creator of the universe. Here we have to stop in an investigation of his character, not because it can never, or will never be explained, but because it cannot be explained by man while man is in his present imperfect condition.

There have been a great many explanations attempted both by the theological and philosophical schools, but hardly any of them of a satisfactory and final nature. To most of these I have already alluded. It is almost certain that as long as the inhabitants of the earth continue in an isolated state, knowing nothing of the inhabitants of the other stars, and therefore unable to draw comparisons, we must expect to remain in the dark as to the nature of the Supreme Being. Some philosophers, indeed, have assumed that Nature is itself God, but we reject this supposition because it is only the old idolatry in a new form, which justifies the adoration of wood or

stone, or anything else as God, simply because these things are parts of nature. We assume more reasonably, we think, that nature is only the creature, the great aggregate of the creations of the Supreme Being. We assume further that God is independent of nature and unchangeable, while we know that nature changes each hour, each minute, each moment.

Undoubtedly God's spirit infuses nature in order to work these changes, but that God himself was or is changing, or even capable of change, would be simply a want of perfection, and such an assumption would be fatal to the *idealistic* theory. A change, in short, must be either for the better or for the worse; and can we assume that the Supreme Being could change either way?

Man, however, being a part of nature, is subject to these changes, but unlike the rest of his fellow-creatures that we know, these changes are, in him, of a two-fold character—first, those of a physical order; and secondly, those of a mental kind. The former he shares with the other creatures known to him, be they either animate or inanimate, but the latter phases he undergoes alone. They are the effects of the working of the soul, of which I have spoken at length in the first part of this book. This soul, so entirely, so utterly indescribable, man naturally regards as the highest gift of the Creator, and it has not inappropriately been termed the connecting link between man and the Supreme Being. We assume it to be immortal; in the first place because we know that nothing in the universe perishes, but only changes its form; secondly, because our soul being a spirit

without form, is itself unchangeable, though we at the same time assume that it is transferred at times from one sphere of action to another.

In our limited comprehension, we, of course, can form no correct conception as to the hereafter of the soul, nor can we adduce testimony to prove what we assume or fancy is the soul's destiny. We form, however, our supposition not alone upon our own consciousness, but more particularly so upon that of other men. We assume that this soul was given to us for a guide through life. According to this theory, it is the soul which regulates and educates man, both as an individual as well as a member of society. It teaches him love and truth, and whenever such teachings are followed by us in the best possible manner, we experience a feeling of satisfaction, while on the contrary we are discontented and ill at ease when we know that these teachings are imperfectly carried out and neglected.

The principles of love and truth inculcated in us are essential to the welfare of man, not alone for his own individual benefit, but also for the welfare of society. We are, therefore, careful to conduct ourselves toward our fellow-men in a loving and truthful spirit, and the laws which society has made for its government, protection, and endurance, are based upon these principles. A violation of either love or truth, when it injuriously interferes with other men's welfare, is accordingly visited upon the violator with due punishment by human laws; always provided they are efficiently administered. Many times, however, these laws are inadequate for punishing



such offences, and in cases of this kind it is a man's own consciousness, his feeling of dissatisfaction and discontent, which punishes the infraction and violation of love and truth.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

I HAVE always thought that a life well spent, according to these principles, is the greatest degree of perfection men may attain on earth; and yet how few—I question, indeed, if there be any—who in the last moments of their earthly existence can say with sincerity and candor, as they review their past lives, that they have no fault to reproach themselves with, that they never in any one instance have deviated from the paths of righteousness and virtue. Nothing will sooner demonstrate to ourselves our imperfections and short-comings than a scrutiny of this character. No matter what we may seem to be in the eyes of other men, however perfect we may appear to be to others, we cannot deceive our own consciousness; we cannot veil our motives from its scrutiny, and we must condemn ourselves, even though mankind, for want of the proper evidence, may pronounce us *not guilty*. Often enough the inward voice of warning is heard by man, and happy is the mortal who has firmness and resolution sufficient to obey its behests.

But when errors have been committed, when the laws of love and truth have been violated by man, the question recurs, whether such transgressions can be pardoned when they are mitigated by amended

conduct afterward. The doctrines of repentance and atonement are nearly as old as the commission of sin itself. When in the heat of the passions men have done wrong, they have still been possessed of their reason to show them their errors after the passions had subsided and they took occasion to reflect. When we acknowledge to ourselves, if not to the world, that we have done wrong, we express it by saying that we are sorry, that we repent, and we attest the sincerity of this repentance, by proposing and endeavoring to repair the wrong we have done in order to atone for it.

The feeling of repentance and the desire for atonement of error are among the sweetest consolations left to man, and theological creeds of all kinds have always commanded and often enjoined their necessity. Philosophy, likewise, teaches humanity both repentance and atonement, not, however, on the supposition that he who experiences them will receive an imaginary or hypothetical reward, but because it is right and just; and because it is necessary to the satisfaction of our own consciousness.

Repentance is of a two-fold character, one of words or thoughts and the other of deeds. No man is hardly ever so wicked, so utterly lost to all consciousness, as not to practice at times, either one or both of these modes of repentance, and in the schools of the theologians this duty has been strictly enjoined, and unhappily too often made the instrument of satisfying and engendering avarice, of obtaining goods under false pretences, and of spreading superstition. It is well enough to do good, to make thereby

a reparation, even though only a partial one, for evil committed, but it is not possible that by simply dispossessing ourselves of a portion of our worldly goods, or by mortifying our flesh and doing other acts of penance, we can be truly repentant, unless we at the same time confess, with heart-felt sorrow, to ourselves more freely even than to others, that our acts have been violations of the great principles of morality.

No creed, no church, no ecclesiastic can absolve us from these violations or sins, as they are commonly termed, by our performing certain prescribed acts of ecclesiastical penance, and we should mock our own consciousness and offer an insult to our own understandings, did we believe that such acts or ceremonies can be accepted even by ourselves as a genuine and heartfelt repentance. If this were so, then indeed would Leo X. have been justified in sending thousands of Tetzels forth among men to offer them absolution for sins for a valuable consideration. It was a protest against this monstrous doctrine which brought forth the Reformation. Even the church, Martin Luther argued, had no such powers, and it was because the pope remained firm in this assumption that the Reformer burned the papal bull and dealt the church a blow which rent it in twain and divided it for all time to come.

Repentance, besides being caused by our consciousness of violations of love and truth, by our own sense of right and the desire of its vindication, is often also the effect of the fear of the Supreme Being. We assume in such cases that God may be displeased



by our wrong-doing, that he may punish us for our violations of what the ecclesiastics term the laws of God. This repentance is the fruit of theological, not of philosophical schools. It has been of great value to the maintenance of the theological system, and has been duly appreciated by all creeds. To this probable punishment by God, we owe the inventions of hell, of Satan, of purgatory, of heaven itself. Men were told that if they did not repent, they would not go to heaven; and they had to repent, not only what errors they had committed against society, but against the church. Now as each church claimed to be the only true one, it followed, that according to the ecclesiastics, all men who did not embrace this one particular church had not repented, and therefore could not get into heaven. Thus the abode hereafter of the blessed, would become a very thinly populated region, while Satan's dominion, which contained all those who did not repent, would be certainly overstocked. But as I have already spoken of these matters in the previous chapters, I will only remark, that though repentance may and no doubt does often lead to good deeds, on account of the fear of certain punishment hereafter, it is but the result of fear and not of that heartfelt character by which men who are repentant ought to be actuated.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

THIS fear of God is inferior to the feeling men experience when they regard God as the dispenser of all the blessings of life. No trait is more marked in the human character than the sense of obligation we feel inwardly toward the Creator. We know that the Supreme Being confers great and inestimable blessings upon us, blessings infinitely greater than our fellow-men could give us. If we, even for small gifts, return thanks to men, is it to be wondered at that we should more readily thank the Supreme Being for giving us all we have, and that we should not alone by words, but also through deeds, wish to show our gratitude? This acknowledgment of indebtedness has brought forth the temples, the churches and the pagodas; it has reared altars and shrines; it has instituted sacrifices and offerings. They are the outward expressions of our gratitude to the Supreme Being, and no matter how superstitious the people are who have done all these things, these or similar acts, nevertheless, show the innate desire prevalent among men all over the earth to reverence the Supreme Power in the manner they deem the most proper, the most exalted and the most impressive.

In the early historic times, as we have already seen, these offerings of men to the Deity were un-

happily too often of the most revolting and sanguinary kind, but the low state of civilization which marked that period, prevented men from showing their gratitude in what we consider a more appropriate and more rational manner. We have seen that men always offered the Supreme Being as tokens of their gratitude, the best and choicest things they possessed. Even the first believers in Monotheism offered to their Creator the choicest animals out of their herds ; and why ? Simply because herds in those times were accounted to be the highest species of wealth.

It is no marvel, therefore, to see this mode of offering sacrifices change when men changed their condition from a migratory and nomadic order, to that of the fixed habitation. Then other species of wealth became superior to mere possession of domestic animals. Some possessed money, others houses, and a great many became owners of large tracts of land. As the theological spirit had increased in a corresponding manner with the civilization of the nations, it was no longer deemed proper to make the customary offerings of animals ; and instead of such gifts, men gave of that species of wealth which they considered to be the highest, as, for instance, gold, silver, jewels, lands, etc. Men who had nothing to give, but their lives, in their enthusiasm devoted their days of existence to what they deemed the service of God, and parents who gave their children for this purpose, imagined that they had made a more acceptable gift to the Supreme Being than all the rest.

During the palmy days of power of the ecclesiasti-

cal spirit, the number of men and women, who either voluntarily or by force, had been incorporated in the ranks of the clergy, had become so great, that the people did not need the services of all its members. This gave rise to the foundation of convents and monasteries, where men and women could live in solitude apart from the world, and hither not only the poor but the rich, flocked in great numbers. This portion of the religious world, living in a more secluded manner, were deemed at first the most worthy of all. It was owing to their subsequently concentrating the wealth of the people in their hands, and the consequent relaxation of their habits of industry which followed, that the monastic orders came gradually into discredit. The people who did not see the inmates of the convents engaged in labor, soon looked upon them as useless members of society, and it is principally on grounds of political economy, on the making each member of society contribute its share of labor, that in latter times some governments have not only discouraged the building of new religious houses of this kind, but also forcibly dissolved the majority of those already in existence.

The Reformation, while it destroyed in a great measure, in Protestant countries at least, the theological influence, also greatly abated the desire for an ecclesiastical life. Still, in order to show their gratitude, men continued to give amply out of their possessions, to the Church. They built chapels and colleges, endowed livings, and provided liberally for the wants of the clergy. This spirit of generosity was, of course, encouraged by the ecclesiastics. Men



who had given largely of their means to the Church, were held up as examples to other men, and were even assured, that by such deeds they had earned places and promotion in heaven. These gifts unduly enriched the clergy, and greatly impoverished the other classes of society. Especially were the clergy solicitous to secure to themselves the reversion of the estates and goods of men of infirm minds, and the aid of the law had too often to be invoked to reinstate the natural heirs in the possession of the wealth of their relatives. So great, indeed, in some countries has the wealth of the Church become, and so out of proportion to all its needs, that the State has in many instances stepped in and taken away part of the Church property. The Disestablishment of the Anglican establishment in Ireland, and the secularization of the lands of the Catholic Church in Italy, are modern instances of this policy. Such acts have naturally met with determined opposition from the clergy, who were sure to call all these measures acts of sacrilegious robbery, and to threaten the vengeance of heaven against all who aided and participated in them.

Philosophy has to apprehend no such spoliations, because she has no expectation of any such gifts; nor does she desire them. Having no ministers to support, no churches to build, no convents to maintain, she has no need of any wealth. Philosophy, however, teaches that it is eminently right and proper that men should be devout and truly pious, that they should reverence the Supreme Being, that they should be grateful to the Creator, and that they

should show this gratitude, not alone by words, but also through deeds. But philosophy teaches us also that there are other and far better, because more useful, ways for showing this gratitude, than the clergy have pointed out to us. Philosophy tells us, for instance, that God can be worshipped everywhere, in the field and in the forest, as well as in the church or in the chapel, at all places and at all times. Philosophy teaches gratitude to God, that we can at all events by our gifts show our gratitude, and as all gifts come from God, and he does not consequently need them, Philosophy says, that in showing this gratitude to God, we should imitate God himself, by the universality and not the exclusive spirit of our giving. We should endeavor, as we cannot benefit all mankind, to do the greatest good to at least the greatest number.

A violation of this principle reacts injuriously on the donors, whether individually or as a nation. Who can doubt, for instance, that an undue liberality to the clergy was the main cause of the miserable condition of Spain during the past two hundred years. The very convents which her people built in such numbers, not only impoverished the nation, but had the tendency to produce gross superstition, which was fostered by the clergy as the surest means of preserving their possessions and their influence over the people. So rapacious became the clergy that they were never satisfied, and till they were violently despoiled in later times, they owned two-fifths of all the lands, which did not bear the burden of taxation, but on the contrary, were cultivated in many places

at the public expense. The great non-producing class, which was created by the erection of the numberless convents, and by the exalted position which the clergy occupied, imposed more labor and restricted leisure among the mass of the people, and knowledge consequently declined, because there were few outside of the clerical ranks who had leisure to cultivate the arts and sciences. Mr. Buckle in his *History of Civilization* has given a melancholy, though a very graphic sketch of the ignorance and degradation of the Spaniards during the last two centuries, and assigns clerical rapacity as the cause of the decline of a nation which once was the most powerful in Europe.

It is for its opposition to this unwholesome ecclesiastical absorption of wealth, that philosophy has been assailed by the clergy, though great care has been taken to assign other reasons than the true one. The clergy, for instance, accuse philosophy of being dangerous to man, because it will not and cannot support a great many theological dogmas, and the cry of infidelity has at all times been readily raised against the great science. This cry has, indeed, been the chief weapon, and often a very efficient one in the hands of the clergy. Claiming for their own faith the distinction of being the only true one, they have charged upon philosophy both infidelity and atheism. Now, we have already seen, that such charges may be believed by the ignorant and superstitious, but that as men increase in knowledge, they will no longer be misled by such falsehoods, but, investigating for themselves, will in due time learn the truth, whose elucidation is the mission of philosophy.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PHILOSOPHY rejecting the aid of mediators, teaches man that he can approach the Creator alone and unguided. It teaches us, as I have explained at length in the preceding chapter, that we can and ought to show our gratitude to the Supreme Being, but, at the same time, it warns us for our own safety not to let the marks of our gratitude run in an isolated channel, but to do with the means we possess, the greatest good to the greatest number. By acting thus, philosophy teaches us that we shall ourselves be eventually benefited. To illustrate, we need but few examples. For instance, had the late Mr. Peabody given his wealth to the clergy to build churches, does any one believe that the money expended would have done as much good as it will in his building healthy and comfortable lodgings for the poor? Philosophy teaches us that our gratitude to the Creator can best be shown by deeds of philanthropy, since it is by acts of this nature that the standard of civilization is raised, the condition of society improved, and men begin to appreciate better their own duties and their obligations to God and their fellow-men.

It is for this reason mainly, that philosophy has always strenuously exerted its power to advance the cause of education, which, while it was a monopoly in



the hands of the Church, was conducted on narrow and bigoted principles. Here another violent struggle took place between the theological and philosophical schools, to which I have already alluded. The clergy everywhere clamored for the retention of this monopoly in their hands, claiming that morality would be undermined if theological doctrines were not made a branch of public education, and taught by members of their profession. But so disordered and conflicting with each other had the various theological systems become when the State undertook the control of education, that it was found impossible to give theological instruction without preferring the creed of one church to those of the others. It was found that simply in the use of the Scriptures, there was great diversity, because the churches had different versions, and accounted the use of any other save the particular one they preferred, as dangerous and tending to heresy. This question has of late years, especially in the United States, become one of great importance, and will in the end result in the exclusion of the Scriptures from the public schools. A remarkable article on the subject, from the pen of a clergyman,\* appeared recently in *Appleton's Journal*, entitled, "With, or Without the Bible," which ends with the following noteworthy passage:

"On the whole, then, judging from the practical working of education *without* the Bible, it seems to be highly satisfactory. Unmixed good is unattainable. Hence we find the alloy of rationalism, and in many cases avowed infidelity. It is not quite cer-

\* Rev. Dr. Keatinge, *Appleton's Journal*, Vol. III., No. 60, p. 578.

tain, however, that religious training would avert these complexions of mind. They are rather an inevitable re-action against an enforced creed, which forbade investigation and silenced opinion. The greater the compression, the fiercer the rebound."

This stifling of investigation is necessarily the result of ecclesiastical training. Whoever does not believe blindly in the dogmas presented to him, is accounted heterodox; and men in order to be true to one particular church, must believe implicitly whatever its clergy may teach. A separate opinion is not, nor can it be, permitted in any system which has certain defined doctrines, at once unalterable and fundamental. A church once established, becomes conservative, while philosophy must advance with the progress of the age. Hence it follows that education under clerical guidance, is forced to partake of its conservative and stationary order, while, if conducted in a philosophical spirit, it must have an onward and progressive tendency. The working of the different systems can best be seen by comparing the schools of our day with those of the Middle Ages when the clergy had the sole control of education.

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE common method by which men show their gratitude to, and veneration for, the Supreme Being, is by public or private worship. The institution of prayer is one of the oldest customs of society. It is found among all nations and in every age. It is the spontaneous expression of the obligation we feel to God, and every being who believes in the Supreme Power, must, by force of such a belief, give expression to it, be it in public or in private. When the various orders of priesthood were instituted by the different nations, the members of these orders—the clergy—were naturally charged with the duties of public worship. They not only offered the sacrifices, but they led in prayer. At first, no doubt, these prayers were offered in the fields, or more generally in the forests and sometimes on the tops of the mountains. Having no habitations and no fixed habits, because of their nomadic customs, men offered their prayers at irregular times and not always in the same places. When, however, nations were formed and a large majority of each nation began to devote its time to the tilling of the soil, or the pursuit of trade, and the mechanical arts, they were forced to erect stationary places of abode, and it was but natural

that they should erect also a place of worship—a house for their God.

When society, by the fruits of labor, became possessed of a surplus—wealth—men not only furnished their own houses better, but they improved the appearance of the house which they had built for their God. As every man contributed to the adorning of God's house, more wealth and labor could be bestowed upon it than on the private dwellings of the people, which it was only the duty of one man to provide for, and the splendor with which the house of God was furnished had the tendency to make this public house more attractive than the private dwellings. To heighten this impression, the priests not only regulated and improved the form of the prayers, but they multiplied their numbers and varied them according to the changes of time or the wants of the people. To these they added lessons, or sermons, to instruct their hearers in the faith. Music, also, at an early age, was called in to add to the attraction of public worship. Further, in order to heighten the impression, certain ceremonies were adopted, and men were commanded to kneel, to show their humility, to wash their hands to indicate their desire for purification, to dance to show their joy, to put ashes on their heads to show their remorse, and to do many other acts unnecessary to enumerate.

Thus arose gradually the structures and ceremonies of worship as established by the various theological creeds. There can be no doubt that all these appliances augment to a certain degree, the rever-



ence for God, and beautify the mode and manner in which we thank him. The cathedrals of Europe and America, the mosques and pagodas of Asia, and even the temples of old Hellas and Rome were erected and furnished magnificently in order to show men's gratitude. The multiplicity of ceremonies, the burning of frankincense, the grand strains of music, the exhibition of fine pictures and statues, all charmed the eye and the ear and heightened the impressions of the worshippers. But while public worship thus gratified the senses in the amplification of these imposing ceremonies, they failed in the end to satisfy the soul. Men, studying closely the works of nature, found more to admire in the contemplation of her works than even the clergy could tell them. They had need of no incentive, no auxiliary to admire the Supreme Being, to thank him, or to worship him. In the forest and on the prairies, they felt that thanks could be rendered to the Deity, as well as in the vaulted cathedrals. Well has the great poet said that

“The groves were God's first temples.”

Under their shadows our primitive fathers sent up their petitions to the Almighty Father of the Universe. There they acknowledged his power and confessed their weakness. No hymn, no choir, no organ, no incense was needed; and will any one say that their supplications were not as acceptable to the Supreme Being as those of their posterity are in these latter days?

Still, it would be wrong in us to condemn, or to-

tally abolish these ceremonies, and grand manifestations of human gratitude. They have been of vast benefit to humanity itself. Not alone did they further man's progress in knowledge—in architecture and music, for instance,—but they kept him nearer to God. They made prayer and worship of the Supreme Being one of the regular and necessary duties of society. They set aside stated times when man was by the force of habit drawn from the pursuit of worldly affairs to ponder on the great source of all existence—the Creator. They inculcated love, not of God alone, but of their fellow-men. No doubt, in many instances, the erection, maintenance, and ornamentation of these sanctuaries, was carried to excess, as we have already seen in the previous chapters, but the evil thereby done has been greatly overbalanced by the good they have accomplished. In our own day, many of the ceremonies practiced in former times have necessarily become useless and obsolete, because the greatness of the Supreme Being is better understood, but when men were less enlightened, they needed these ceremonies more than we do, in order to become impressed with gratitude to God.

Philosophy, in this respect, has simplified religion. It has shown men how near God is to them, how he watches and cares for us, that it is both reasonable and natural that we should thank the Supreme Being, and that this rendering of thanks is indeed essential to render us happy and contented. Prayer, therefore, is not inaptly termed the balm of life. It is the invigorating oil of the soul. It heals wounds

and renews strength. But, as I have already stated, prayer, in order to be effectual, in order to give us the needed consolation, should be followed by good deeds. Our words of thanks become only empty, meaningless phrases, if they are not accompanied by actions which show that we acknowledge God's goodness by being good and just ourselves to our neighbors. Let us wrong our fellow-men, and our prayers become forgeries and sacrilege. Then we mock the Deity by offering them, and show our folly by imagining that mere words can efface, even from our own consciousness, the recollection of our evil deeds.

#### CONCLUSION.

At all times men have endeavored to produce harmony of religious belief. With but few exceptions—the Quakers, for instance,—the work of gaining proselytes by force, as well as by persuasion, has been prosecuted by the adherents of the different theological systems. The pages of history are replete with the records of religious wars; wars carried on to produce this unification of faith, and of all wars, there are none which teem with so many chapters of horrors and cruelties as have these dreadful struggles waged ostensibly in the sacred name of religion. Not alone have these wars been confined to ancient times, as, for instance, the war of Antiochus against the Jews, or to uncivilized portions of the globe, but we find on the contrary, that the most dreadful struggles of this nature have taken place in compar-

atively modern ages, and in the most civilized countries of Europe.

Who will not recollect with a shudder the horrors of that one single night of St. Bartholomew; the Thirty Years' War in Germany; the crusades against the Albigenses; the persecution of the Moriscoes in Spain; the long age of Catholic disability in Great Britain, and hundreds of similar instances? It was only by these dreadful struggles that the princes and the clergy were finally forced to concede the boon of toleration; that men could no longer be compelled ostensibly to avow their belief in dogmas which secretly they condemned, and which, in their hearts, they held to be wrong, and even sacrilegious.

The principle of toleration when it became finally firmly established, weakened and impaired the power and influence of the established State religions. With the loss of the power to compel outward conformity of all classes to such systems, these institutions slowly and gradually declined in importance, and from time to time important secessions from the original church occurred. Hence, with the advance of toleration, we find in our days that new sects are constantly springing up which contest the field with the older churches. These new sects necessarily adopt more liberal views than those held by the older ones, views more in harmony with the progress of the age in scientific knowledge, and are untrammelled by the numberless boundaries and hedges behind which the older established theological systems have fortified themselves.

The progress these new theological schools have



made, is one of the most encouraging signs of the times, since much of the superstition, and many of the old fallacious dogmas, have been boldly disavowed by them. Man has been brought nearer to the Creator. The traditionary mediators, such as saints, angels, holy-ghosts, virgins, etc., are beginning to be no longer relied upon, for we know that we need no other guide than our own conscience to walk in the way of the Lord. We know that we have to do to others as we wish to be done by, in order to fill worthily our place on earth. We know that we have to regard all mankind as being alike the children of God; as our brethren. We finally know that when we do this, and live a virtuous and useful life, we can without misgiving, without dread, with hope and with confidence await the hereafter, wherever and of whatsoever kind it may be. To such a doctrine, I believe, the spirit of the age is tending. Not rapidly, of course, but slowly and surely. Thousands of ages may yet have to pass, ere the day of its glory will come. But come it will as surely as the seasons come in their order. Neither ourselves nor our children may live to see this day, but we have the consolation of believing that we are hastening its coming by our works.

THE END.

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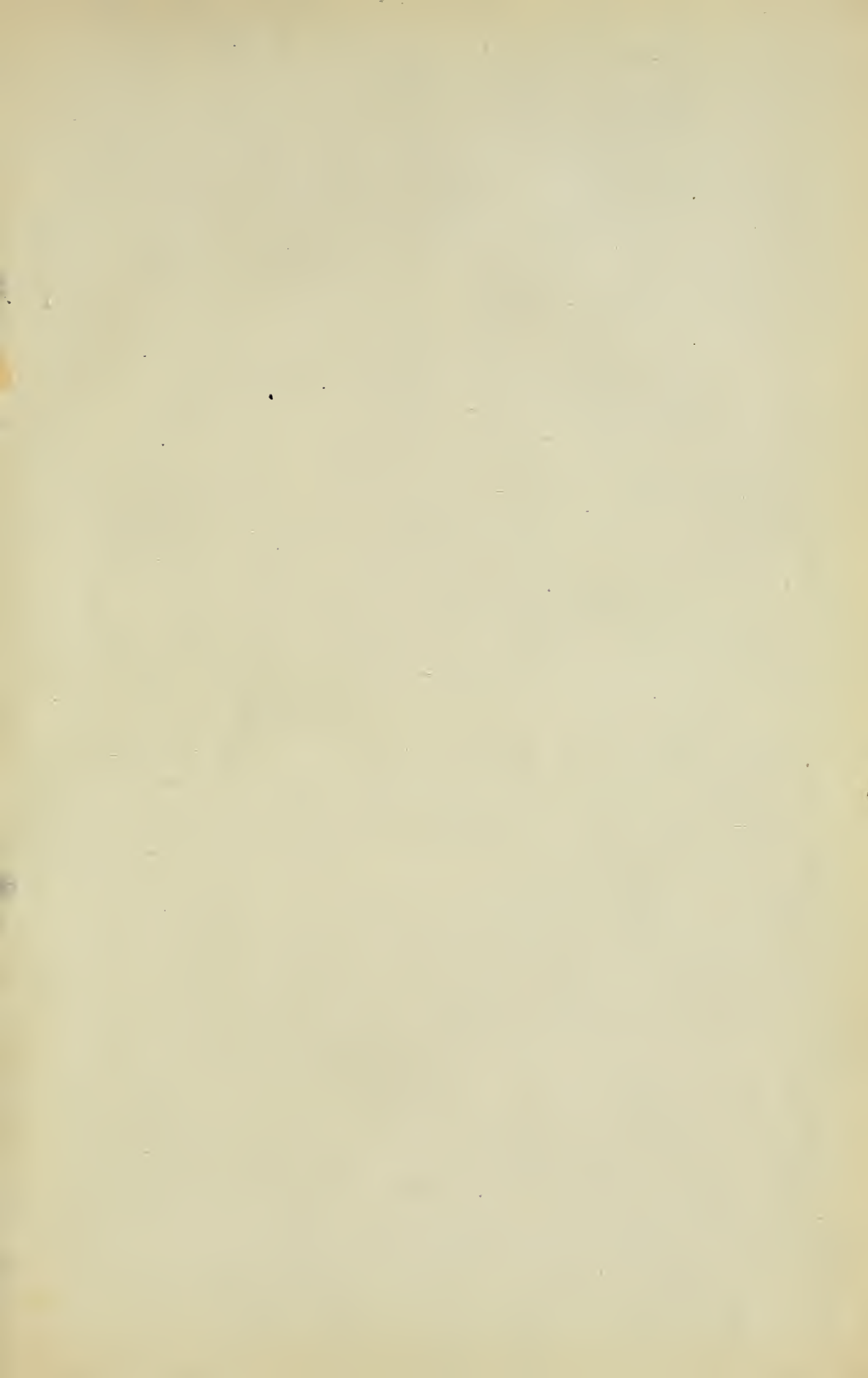
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